

LEONIDAS.

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LEONIDAS.



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LEONIDAS.

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P O E M.

——Θακῆν δοῖσιν ἀνάγκη
Τί κε τις ἀνώνυμον γῆρας ἐν σκότῳ
Καθήμενος ἔφει μάταν, ἀπάντων
Καλῶν ἄμμορος; PIND. OLYMP. OD. I.

G L A S G O W:

PRINTED BY ROBERT & ANDREW FOULIS,
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LEONIDAS

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

TO illustrate the following poem, to vindicate the subject from the censure of improbability, and to shew by the concurring evidence of the best historians, that such disinterested public virtue did once exist, I have thought it would not be improper to prefix the subsequent narration.

While Darius, the father of Xerxes, was yet on the throne of Persia, Cleomenes and Demaratus were kings in Lacedaemon, both descended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately expos'd by an uncertain rumour, which render'd his legitimacy suspected, to the malice and treachery of his colleague, who had conceiv'd a personal resentment against him; for Cleomenes taking advantage of this report, persuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi; and was assisted in his perfidious designs by a near relation of Demaratus, nam'd Leotychides, who aspir'd to succeed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to cor-

rupt the priestess of Delphi, who declar'd Demaratus not legitimate. Thus by the base practices of his colleague Cleomenes, and his kinsman Leotychides, Demaratus was expell'd from his office of king in the commonwealth, after having frequently signaliz'd his valour in its service. He went into voluntary banishment, and retiring to Asia, was there protected by Darius; while Leotychides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomenes Leonidas was made king, who rul'd in conjunction with this Leotychides, when Xerxes, the son of Darius, invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces, which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions, as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years after the event, and publicly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world, wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth, he must certainly have been detected, and censur'd by some among so great a multitude, and such a voluntary falsehood must have entirely destroyed that merit and authority, which have pro-

cur'd to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of the father of history. On the first news of this attempt upon their liberty, a convention was immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth, compos'd of deputies from the several states of Greece, to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to enquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war, who return'd with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king descended from Hercules must die, or Lacedaemon would be entirely destroy'd. Leonidas immediately offer'd to sacrifice his life for the safety of Lacedaemon, and marching to Thermopylae, possess'd himself of that important pass with three hundred of his countrymen; who with the forces of some other cities in the Peloponnesus, together with the Thebans, Thespians, and the troops of those states, which adjoin'd to Thermopylae, compos'd an army of near eight thousand men.

Xerxes was now advanc'd as far as Thessalia; when hearing that a small body of Grecians was assembled at Thermopylae, with some Lacedaemonians at their head, and among the rest Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules, he dispatch'd a single horseman before to observe

their numbers, and discover their designs. When this horseman approach'd, he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay conceal'd behind a rampart formerly rais'd by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylae; so that his whole attention was employ'd on those, who were on guard before the wall, and who at that instant chanc'd to be the Lacedaemonians. Their manner and gestures greatly astonish'd the Persian; some were amusing themselves in gymnastic exercises; others were combing their hair; and all discover'd a total disregard of him, whom they suffer'd to depart without molestation, and report to Xerxes what he had seen: which appearing to that prince quite ridiculous, he sent for Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and requir'd him to explain this strange behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus inform'd him, that it was a custom among the Spartans to comb down and adjust their hair, when they were determin'd to fight till the last extremity. Xerxes notwithstanding, in the confidence of his power, sent ambassadors to the Grecians to demand their arms, to bid them disperse, and become his friends and allies; which proposals being receiv'd with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Saces to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive in-

to his presence. These nations immediately attack'd the Grecians, and were soon repuls'd with great slaughter; fresh troops still succeeded, but with no better fortune than the first, being oppos'd to an enemy not only superiour in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnish'd with better arms both offensive and defensive.

Plutarch in his Laconic apothegms reports, that the Persian king offer'd to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of all Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to have been made before a tryal of their force, and must therefore have been proposed by Xerxes after such a series of ill success, as might probably have depress'd the insolence of his temper; and it may be easily suppos'd, that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact or not, this much is certain, that Xerxes was reduc'd to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylae; till he was extricated from his distress by a Malian nam'd Epialtes, who conducted twenty thousand of the Persian army into Greece through a pass, which lay higher up the country among the mountains of Oeta: whereas the passage at Thermopylae was situ-

ated on the sea-shore between the end of those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who, upon the first sight of the enemy, inconsiderately abandon'd their station, and put themselves in array upon a neighbouring eminence; but the Persians wisely avoided an engagement, and with the utmost expedition march'd to Thermopylae. Leonidas no sooner receiv'd information that the Barbarians had pass'd the mountains, but he commanded the allies to retreat, reserving the three hundred Spartans, and four hundred Thebans, whom, as they follow'd him with reluctance at first, he now compell'd to stay. But the Thespians, whose number amounted to seven hundred, would not be perswaded by Leonidas to forsake him. Their commander was Demophilus, and the most eminent amongst them for his valour was Dithyrambus. Among the Spartans the most conspicuous next to Leonidas was Dieneces, who being told, that the multitude of Persian arrows would obscure the sun, replied, the battle would then be in the shade. Two brothers, named Alpheus and Maron, are also recorded for their valour, and were Lacedaemonians. Megistias a priest, by birth an Acarnanian, refused to desert Leonidas, though intreated by

him to consult his safety, and retire; but sent away his only son, and remain'd himself behind to die with the Lacedaemonians. Among the three hundred Spartans, were two call'd Eurytus and Aristodemus, who being almost blind, were dismiss'd by Leonidas. Of these Aristodemus return'd home; but Eurytus waited till the Persians descended from the hills, and then commanding his slave to lead him among the combatants, was slain with the rest of his countrymen.

Herodotus relates, that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadest part of Thermopylae; where, being surrounded by the Persians, they fell with great numbers of their enemies: but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others affirm, that the Grecians attack'd the very camp of Xerxes in the night. The action is thus describ'd by Diodorus. 'The Grecians having now reject'd all thoughts of safety, preferring glory to life, unanimously call'd on their general to lead them against the Persians, before they could be appris'd that their friends had pass'd round the mountains. Leonidas embraced the occasion, which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, and commanded them forthwith to dine as men who were to sup in Elysium. Himself, in consequence of this com-

mand, took a repast, as the means to furnish strength for a long continuance, and to give perseverance in danger. After a short refreshment the Grecians were now prepar'd, and receiv'd orders to assail the enemies camp, to put all they met to the sword, and force a passage to the royal pavilion; when, form'd into one compact body, with Leonidas himself at their head, they march'd against the Persians, and enter'd their camp at the dead of night. The Barbarians wholly unprepar'd, and blindly conjecturing that their friends were defeated, and themselves attack'd by the united power of Greece, hurry together from their tents with the utmost disorder and consternation. Many were slain by Leonidas and his party, but much greater multitudes by their own troops, to whom, in the midst of this blind confusion, they were not distinguishable from enemies: for as night took away the power of discerning truly, and the tumult was spread universally over the camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue. The want of command, of a watch-word, and of confidence in themselves, reduc'd the Persians to such a state of confusion, that they destroy'd each other without distinction. Had Xerxes continu'd in the royal pavilion, the

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Grecians without difficulty might have brought
 the war to a speedy conclusion by his death ;
 but he, at the beginning of the tumult, betook
 himself to flight with the utmost precipitation ;
 when the Grecians rushing into the tent put
 to the sword most of those who were left be-
 hind : then, while night lasted, they rang'd
 through the whole camp in diligent search of
 the tyrant. When morning appear'd, the Per-
 sians perceiving the true state of things, held
 the inconsiderable number of their enemies in
 contempt ; yet were so terrified at their valour,
 that they avoided a near engagement ; but,
 inclosing the Grecians on ev'ry side, shower'd
 their darts and arrows upon them at a dis-
 tance, and in the end destroy'd their whole
 body. Such was the period of their lives, who,
 under the conduct of Leonidas, defended the
 pass of Thermopylae. Who can refrain from
 admiring the virtue of these men, who, with
 one consent maintaining the post allotted by
 their country, chearfully renounc'd their lives
 for the common safety of Greece, and esteem'd
 a glorious death more eligible than to live
 with dishonour ? Nor is the consternation of
 the Persians incredible. Who among those
 Barbarians could have conjectur'd such an
 event ? who could have expected that five hun-

‘dred men would have dared to attack a mil-
 ‘lion? Wherefore shall not all posterity from
 ‘that day reflect on the virtue of these men as
 ‘the object of imitation, who, though the loss
 ‘of their lives was the necessary consequence of
 ‘their undertaking, were yet unconquer’d in
 ‘their spirit; and, among all the great names
 ‘deliver’d down to remembrance, are the only
 ‘heroes who obtain’d more glory in their fall,
 ‘than others from the brightest victories? With
 ‘justice may they be deem’d the preservers of
 ‘the Grecian liberty, even preferably to those
 ‘who were conquerors in the battles fought af-
 ‘terwards with Xerxes; for the memory of
 ‘their valour who fell at Thermopylae, for
 ‘ever dejected the Barbarians, while the Greeks
 ‘were fir’d with emulation to equal such a pitch
 ‘of magnanimity. Upon the whole, there ne-
 ‘ver were any before these, who attain’d to im-
 ‘mortality through the mere excess of virtue;
 ‘whence the praise of their fortitude has not
 ‘been recorded by historians only, but has
 ‘been celebrated by numbers of poets, among
 ‘others by Simonides the lyric.”

Pausanias in his Laconics considers the de-
 fence of Thermopylae, as an action superior to
 any atchiev’d by their cotemporaries, and to all
 the exploits of preceding ages. ‘Never (says

a mil- he) had Xerxes beheld Greece, or laid in ashes
y from the city of Athens, had not his forces under
men as Hydarnes been conducted through a path over
he loss of Oeta, and by that means encompassing the
ence of Greeks, overcome and slain Leonidas." Nor
er'd in is it improbable, that Leonidas should have main-
names tain'd his post in so narrow a pass, till the
e only whole army of Xerxes had perish'd by famine.
ir fall, At the same time the Persian navy had been mi-
With serably shatter'd by a storm, and worsted in an
vers of engagement with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his
o those brave companions, so meritorious to their coun-
ght af- try, and so glorious to themselves, has obtain'd
ory of such an high degree of veneration and applause
e, for from past ages, that few among the ancient com-
Greeks pilers of history, have been silent in this amaz-
a pitch ing instance of magnanimity and zeal for liber-
ere ne- ty; and many are the epigrams and inscriptions
to im- now extant, some on the whole body, others
virtue; on particulars, who died at Thermopylae, still
as not preserving their memory in every nation con-
ut has versant with learning, and at this distance of
among time still rendring their virtue the object of ad-
the de- miration and praise.

I shall now detain the reader no longer, than
rior to to take this public occasion of expressing my
d to all sincere regard for the LORD VISCOUNT COB-
r (says

NAM, and the sense of my obligations for the early honour of his friendship. To him I inscribe the following poem; and herein might I be justified, independent of all personal motives, from his Lordship's public conduct so highly distinguish'd by his disinterested zeal, and unshaken fidelity to his country, not less in civil life than in the field: and to whom a poem, founded on a character eminent for military glory, and love of liberty, is due from the nature of the subject.

R. GLOVER.

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THE
A R G U M E N T S.

B O O K I.

XERXES, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and passed over the Hellespont into Thrace with a design to conquer Greece; the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner apprised of his march into Thrace, than they determined without further delay to dispute his passage at the straits of Thermopylae, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Theffaly. Alpheus, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen; who chanced that day to be assembled in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event

of the war. Leotychides, one of their two kings, counsels the people to advance no further, than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedaemon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but Leonidas, the other king, dissuades them from it. Agis, the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedaemonians, unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. Leonidas offers himself for the victim. Three hundred Spartans are chosen to accompany him to Thermopylae, and Alpheus returns to the Isthmus. Leonidas, after an interview with his queen, departs from Lacedaemon. At the end of six days he encamps near the Isthmus, when he is joined by Alpheus; who describes the auxiliaries, that wait at the Isthmus, those, who are already possessed of Thermopylae, as also the pass itself; and concludes with a relation of the captivity of his brother Polydorus in Persia.

BOOK II.

LEONIDAS on his approach to the Isthmus is met by the leaders of the troops sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies, who composed the Isthmian council. He harangues them, then proceeds in conjunction with the other forces towards Thermopylae, is joined by Dithyrambus, and arrives at the straits about noon on the fourth day after his departure from the Isthmus. He is received at Thermopylae by the Thespian commander Demophilus, and by Anaxander the Theban treacherously recommending Epialtes a Malian, who seeks by a pompous description of the Persian power to intimidate the Grecian leaders, as they are viewing the enemy's camp from the top of mount Oeta. He is answered by Dieneces and Diomedon. Xerxes sends Tigranes and Phraortes to the Grecian camp, who are dismissed by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which last, incensed with the insolence of Tigranes, treats him with contempt

and menaces. This occasions a challenge to single combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes after a conference with Anaxander declares his intention of returning to Xerxes.

B O O K III.

TIGRANES and Phraortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne surrounded by his satraps in a magnificent pavilion; while the Magi stand before him, and sing an hymn containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report, that the Grecians are determined to maintain the pass against him; but commands Demaratus an exiled king of Sparta to attend him, and ascends his chariot to take a view of the Grecians himself. He passes through the midst of his army consisting of many nations differing in arms, customs, and manners. He advances to the en-

grance of the straits, and, surpris'd at the behaviour of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Demaratus; which occasions a conversation between them on the mercenary forces of Persia, and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion.

B O O K IV.

LEONIDAS rising by break of day commands a body of Arcadians, with the Thespians, and Plataeans to be drawn out for battle in that part of Thermopylae, which lay under the Phocian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued with great slaughter by Diomedon and Di-

thyrambus to the extremity of the pass. The Grecian commanders after the pursuit retire for refreshment to a cave in the side of mount Oeta. Leonidas recalls them to the camp, and sends down fresh forces. Diomedon and Dithyrambus, with the Plataeans, are permitted to continue in the field. By the advice of Diomedon the Grecians advance to the broadest part of Thermopylae, where they form a line of thirty in depth, consisting of the Plataeans, Mantinéans, Tegaeans, Thebans, Corinthians, Phliasi-ans, and Mycenaeans. The attack is renew'd with great violence by Hyperanthes, Abrocomes, and the principal Persian leaders at the head of some chosen troops.

B O O K V.

HYPERANTHES discontinuing to fight, while he waits for reinforcements, Teribazus, a Persian remarkable for his merit and learning, and highly beloved by Hyperanthes, but unhappy in his passion for Ariana, a daughter of Da-

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rius, advances from the rest of the army to the rescue of a friend in distress, who lay wounded on the field of battle. Teribazus is attacked by Diophantus, the Mantinéan, whom he overcomes, then engaging with Dithyrambus, is himself slain. Hyperanthes hastens to his succour. A general battle ensues. Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, partly by their own valour, and partly by the perfidy of the Thebans, who desert the line, being on the point of forcing the Grecians, are repulsed by the Lacedaemonians. Hyperanthes composes a select body out of the Persian standing forces, and making an improvement in their discipline renews the attack; upon which Leonidas changes the disposition of his army: Hyperanthes and the ablest Persian generals are driven out of the field, and several thousands of the Barbarians, circumvented in the pass, are entirely destroyed.

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BOOK VI.

NIGHT coming on, the Grecians retire to their tents. A guard is placed on the Phocian wall under the command of Agis. He admits into the camp a lady accompanied by a single slave, and conducts them to Leonidas; when she discovers herself to be Ariana, sister of Xerxes and Hyperanthes, and sues for the body of Teribazus; which being found among the slain, she kills herself upon it. The slave, who attended her, proves to be Polydorus, brother of Alpheus and Maron, and who had been formerly carried into captivity by a Phoenician pirate. He relates before an assembly of the chiefs a message from Demaratus to the Spartans, which discloses the treachery of the Thebans, and of Epialtes the Malian, who had undertaken to lead part of the Persian army through a pass among the mountains of Oeta. This information throws the council into a great tumult, which is pacified by Leonidas, who sends Alpheus to observe the motions of these Persians, and Dieneces with a party of Lacedaemonians

to support the Phocians, with whom the defence of these passages in the hills had been intrusted. In the mean time Agis sends the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana to the camp of Xerxes.

B O O K VII.

THE bodies of Teribazus and Ariana are brought into the presence of Xerxes, soon after a report had reached the camp, that half his navy was shipwrecked. The Persian monarch, quite dispirited, is persuaded by Argestes, one of the satraps, to send an ambassador to the Spartan king. Argestes himself is deputed, who, after revealing his embassy to Leonidas in secret, is by him led before the whole army, and there receives his answer. In the mean time Alpheus returns and declares, that the enemies were possessed of the passages in the hills, and were hastening to Thermopylae, upon which Leonidas offers to send away all the army except his three hundred Spartans; but Diomedon, Demophilus, Dithyrambus, and Megistias refuse to

depart : he then dismisses Argeſtes, informs the Grecians of his deſign to attack the Perſian camp in the night, and making all the neceſſary diſpoſitions retires to his pavilion.

B O O K VIII.

L EONIDAS riſing about three hours before midnight relates to an aſſembly of the leaders a dream, which is interpreted by Megiſtias ; he then arms himſelf, and marches in proceſſion with his whole troop to an altar newly raiſed on a neighbouring meadow, and there offers a ſacrifice to the Muſes : he invokes the aſſiſtance of thoſe Goddeſſes, he animates his companions, and then placing himſelf at their head leads them againſt the enemy in the dead of the night.

THE ARGUMENTS. xxvii

B O O K IX.

LEONIDAS and the Grecians penetrate through the Persian camp to the very pavilion of Xerxes, who avoids destruction by flight. The Barbarians are slaughtered in great multitudes, and their camp is set on fire. Leonidas conducts his men back to Thermopylae, engages the Persians, who were descended from the hills, and after numberless proofs of superior strength and valour sinks down, covered with wounds, and expires the last of all the Grecian commanders.

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LEONIDAS.

B O O K I.

REHEARSE, O Muse, the deeds and glorious death
Of that fam'd Spartan, who withstood the pow'r
Of Xerxes near Thermopylae, and fell
To save his country. When from Asia's coast
With half the nations of the peopl'd globe
The Persian king the Hellespont had pass'd,
And now in Thrace his boundless camp was spread;
Soon to the Isthmus, where th' assembl'd chiefs
Of Greece in anxious council long had sat,
Now best their menac'd liberties to guard,
The dreadful tidings reach'd. The near approach
Of Asia's lord determines their resolves.
These they convey to all the Grecian states.
Back to Eurotas' shores, where Sparta rose,
Laconian Alpheus speeds: in council there
He finds the Spartan people with their kings;
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,
From Hercules descended. They the sons
Of Lacedaemon had conven'd to learn
The sacred mandates of th' immortal gods,
That morn expected from the Delphian dome;

But in their presence Alpheus first appear'd,
And thus address'd them. For immediate war
Prepare, O Spartans. Xerxes' num'rous pow'rs
Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.
The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard
The strait and rocky entrance into Greece,
Thermopylae; where ev'n a slender force
May stem the torrent of unnumber'd foes.

He said, when Leotychides, who shar'd
The rule with great Leonidas, bespoke
The Spartans thus. My countrymen, give ear.
Why from her bosom should Laconia send
Her valiant sons to wage a distant war
For others' safety; why exhaust her strength,
And thin her numbers in defence of those,
Who far remote from Lacedaemon dwell
Beyond the Isthmus? there the gods have plac'd
Our native ramparts, there our empires bound;
And there alone our country claims our swords.

He ceas'd. The people with assenting shouts
Replied, when thus Leonidas began.

O most ungen'rous counsel! most unjust,
And base desertion of the Grecian weal!
What! shall th' Athenians, whose assiduous fleets
Undaunted watch th' innumerable foes,
Where'er they menace our affrighted shores,
And trust th' impending danger of the fields
To Sparta's well-known valour; shall they hear,
That we, disowning thus the gen'ral cause,
Maintain the Isthmus only, and expose

The rest of Greece, ev'n Athens, while she guards
Her naked coasts, to all the waste of war,
Her walls to ruin, and her fields to flames,
Her sons, her matrons, and her hoary sires
To violation, servitude, and shame?
Should they hear, such counsels guide our state,
Would they not court the first propitious gale
To waft them far from such perfidious friends,
And raise new seats in other climes remote,
Safe from insulting foes, and false allies?
Then should we soon behold the proud array
Of Xerxes' navy with their hostile beaks
Affront our shores, and deluge all our fields
With inexhausted numbers. Half the Greeks,
By us betray'd to bondage, would support
The Persian king, and lift th' avenging spear
For our destruction. But, my friends, reject
Such mean and dang'rous counsels, which will blast
Your long establish'd glories, and assist
The proud invader. O eternal king
Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds!
Each low and partial passion thence dispel!
Till this great truth in ev'ry heart be known,
That none, but those, who aid the public cause,
Can shield their countries, or themselves from chains.

He said, by shame suppress'd, each clam'rous voice
Was lost in silence; till a gen'ral shout
Proclaim'd th' approach of Agis from the fane,
Where, taught by Phoebus on the Delphic hill,
The Pythian maid his oracles reveal'd.

He came; but discontent and grief o'ercaft
 His anxious brow. Reluctant he advanc'd,
 And now prepar'd to speak. Th' impatient throng
 Was gather'd round him; motionless they stood
 With expectation; not a whisper told
 The silent fear, but all on Agis gaze;
 And still as death attend the solemn tale.
 As o'er the western waves, when ev'ry storm
 Is hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze
 Soft-breathing lightly with its wings along
 The slacken'd cordage glides, the sailor's ear
 Perceives no sound throughout the vast expanse;
 None, but the murmurs of the sliding prow,
 Which slowly parts the smooth and yielding main:
 So through the wide and list'ning crowd no sound,
 No voice, but thine, O Agis, broke the air,
 Declaring thus the oracle divine.

I went to Delphi; I enquir'd what fate
 Was doom'd to Sparta from th' impending war;
 When thus th' all-seeing deity replied.

"Inhabitants of Sparta, Persia's arms
 Shall lay your proud and antient seat in dust;
 Unless a king, from Hercules deriv'd,
 Cause Lacedaemon for his death to mourn."

As, when the hand of Perseus had disclos'd
 The snakes of dire Medusa, all, who view'd
 The Gorgon features, were congeal'd to stone,
 With ghastly eye-balls on the hero bent,
 And horror living in their marble form;
 Thus with amazement rooted, where they stood,

And froze with speechless terrour, on their kings
The Spartans gaz'd: but soon their anxious looks
All on the great Leonidas unite,
Long known his country's refuge. He alone
Remains unshaken. Rising he displays
His godlike presence. Dignity and grace
Adorn his frame, and manly beauty, join'd
With strength Herculean. On his aspect shines
Sublimest virtue, and desire of fame,
Where justice gives the laurel; in his eye
The inextinguishable spark, which fires
The souls of patriots: while his brow supports
Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.
Serene he rose, and thus address'd the throng.

Why this astonishment on ev'ry face,
Ye men of Sparta? Does the name of death
Create this fear and wonder? O my friends!
Why do we labour through the arduous paths,
Which lead to virtue? Fruitless were the toil,
Above the reach of human feet were plac'd
The distant summit, if the fear of death
Could intercept our passage. But in vain
His blackest frowns and terrours he assumes
To shake the firmness of the mind, which knows,
That wanting virtue life is pain and woe,
That wanting liberty ev'n virtue mourns,
And looks around for happiness in vain.
Then speak, O Sparta, and demand my life;
My heart exulting answers to thy call,
And smiles on glorious fate To live with fame

The gods allow to many ; but to die
With equal lustre, is a blessing, Heav'n
Selects from all the choicest boons of fate,
And with a sparing hand on few bestows.

He said. New wonder fix'd the gazing throng,
In silence Joy and Admiration sat
Suspending praise. At length with high acclaim
The arch of heav'n resounded, when amid
Th' assembly stood Dienece, and spake.

So from Thermopylae may Sparta's shouts
Affright the ear of Asia ! Haste, my friends,
To guard the gates of Greece, which open stand
To Tyranny and Rapine. They with dread
Will shrink before your standards, and again
In servile Persia seek their native seats.
Your wives, your sons, your parents, gen'ral Greece
Forbid delay ; and equal to the cause
A chief behold : can Spartans ask for more ?

He ceas'd ; when Alpheus thus. It well becomes
The Spartans held the chiefs of Greece, and fam'd
For dauntless courage, and unyielding hearts,
Which neither want, nor pain, nor death can bend,
To lead the rest to battle. Then with speed
From all your number form a chosen band,
While I returning will my seat resume
Among the Isthmian council, and declare
Your instant march. Our brave allies, I deem,
Now on the Isthmus wait the Spartan king ;
All but the Locrian and Boeotian force,
With Phocis' youth, appointed to secure

Thermopylae. This said, not long he paus'd,
But with unwearied steps his course renews.

Now from th' assembly with majestic steps
Forth moves their godlike king, with conscious worth
His gen'rous bosom glowing: like his fire,
Th'invincible Alcides, when he trod
With ardent speed to face in horrid war
The triple form of Geryon, or against
The bulk of huge Antaeus match his strength.
Say, Muse, who next present their dauntless breasts
To meet all danger in their country's cause?

Dieneces advances sage, and brave,
And skill'd along the martial field to range
The order'd ranks of battle; Maron next,
To Alpheus dear, his brother, and his friend.
Then rose Megistias with his blooming heir,
Joy of his age, and Menalippus call'd;
Megistias, wise and venerable seer,
Whose penetrating mind, as fame records,
Could from the entrails of the victim slain
Before the altar, and the mystic sight
Of birds foresee the dark events of time.
Though sprung a stranger on the distant shore
Of Acarnania, for his worth receiv'd,
And hospitably cherish'd, he the wreath
Pontific bore amid the Spartan camp;
Serene in danger, nor his sacred arm
From warlike toils secluding, nor unskill'd
To wield the sword, or poise the weighty spear.
Him Agis follow'd, brother to the queen

Of great Leonidas; his friend, in war
His tried companion. Graceful were his steps,
And gentle his demeanour. Still his soul
Preserv'd its rigid virtue, though refin'd
With arts unknown to Lacedaemon's race.
High was his office. He when Sparta's weal
Their aid and counsel from the gods requir'd,
Was sent the sacred messenger to learn
Their mystic will in oracles declar'd
From rocky Delphi, and Dodona's shade,
Or sea-incircled Delos, or the cell
Of dark Trophonius round Boeotia known.
Three hundred more compleat th'intrepid band.
But to his home Leonidas retir'd.
There calm in secret thought he thus explor'd
His mighty soul, while nature to his breast
A short-liv'd terrour call'd.— What sudden grief,
What cold reluctance thus unmans my heart,
And whispers, that I fear?— Can death dismay
Leonidas, so often seen and scorn'd,
When clad most dreadful in the battle's front?—
Or to relinquish life in all its pride,
With all my honours blooming round my head,
Repines my soul? or rather to forsake,
Eternally forsake my weeping wife,
My infant offspring, and my faithful friends?—
Leonidas awake! shall these withstand
The public safety? lo! thy country calls.—
O sacred voice, I hear thee! at that sound
Returning virtue brightens in my heart;

Fear vanishes before her. Death, receive
My unreluctant hand, and lead me on.
Thou too, O Fame, attendant on my fall,
With wings unwearied shalt protect my tomb,
Nor time himself shall violate my praise.

The hero thus confirm'd his virtuous soul,
When Agis enter'd: If till now my tongue
(He thus began) O brother, has delay'd
To pay its grateful off'ring of the praise,
Thy merit claims, and only fill'd the cries
Of general applause, forgive thy friend;
Since her distresses, hers, whom most you love,
Detain'd me from thee. O unequall'd man!
Though Lacedaemon call thy first regard,
Forget not her, who now for thee laments
In sorrows, which fraternal love in vain
Hath strove to sooth. Leonidas embrac'd
His gen'rous friend, and thus replied. Most dear
And best of men! conceive not, but my heart
Must still remember her, from whom my life
Its largest share of happiness derives.
Can I, who yield my breath, lest others mourn,
Lest thousands should be wretched; when she pines,
More lov'd than any, though less dear than all,
Can I neglect her griefs! In future days
If thou with grateful memory record
My name and fate, O Sparta, pass not this
Unheeded by; the life, I gave for thee,
Knew not a painful hour to tire my soul,
Nor were they common joys, I left behind.

So spake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd
With fondest passion; then in eager haste
The faithful partner of his bed he sought.
Amid her weeping children sat the queen,
Immovable and mute; her swimming eyes
Fix'd on the earth. Her arms were folded o'er
Her lab'ring bosom blotted with her tears.
As, when a dusky mist involves the sky,
The moon through all the dreary vapours spreads
The radiant vesture of its silver light
O'er the dull face of nature; so her charms
Divinely graceful shone upon her grief,
Bright'ning the cloud of woe. The chief approach'd.
Soon as in gentlest phrase his well-known voice
Her drooping mind awaken'd, for a time
Its cares were hush'd: she lifts her languid head,
And thus gives utterance to her tender thoughts.

O thou, whose presence is my only joy,
If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and voice
Can dissipate at once the sharpest pangs,
How greatly am I wretched; who no more
Must hear that voice, which lulls my anguish thus,
Nor see that face, which makes affliction smile!

This said, returning grief her breast invades.
Her orphan children, her devoted lord
Pale, bleeding, breathless on the field of death,
Her ever-during solitude of woe,
All rise in mingled horror to her sight,
When thus in bitt'rest agony she spoke.

O whither art thou going from my arms!

shall I no more behold thee! Oh! no more
in conquest clad, and wrapt in glorious dust
Wilt thou return to greet thy native soil,
And make thy dwelling joyful! Ah! too brave,
Why wouldst thou hasten to the dreary gates
Of death, uncall'd? Another might have fall'n,
Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,
Deeds dear to all, and Sparta been secure.

Now ev'ry eye with mine is drown'd in tears,
All with these babes lament their father lost.
But oh! how heavy is our lot of pain!
Our sighs must last, when ev'ry other breast
Exults with transport, and the public joy
Will but increase our anguish. Yet unmov'd,
Thou didst not heed our sorrows, didst not seek
A moment's pause, to teach us how to bear
Thy endless absence, or like thee to die.

Unutterable sorrow here confin'd
Her voice. These words Leonidas return'd.

I see, I feel thy anguish, nor my soul
Has ever known the prevalence of love,
Nor prov'd a father's fondness, as this hour;
Nor, when most ardent to assert my fame,
Was once my heart insensible to thee.

Now had it stain'd the honours of my name
To hesitate a moment, and suspend
My country's fate, till shameful life prefer'd
By my inglorious colleague left no choice,
That what in me were infamy to shun,
Not virtue to accept? Then deem no more,

That of thy love regardless, or thy tears,
 I haste uncall'd to death. The voice of fate,
 The gods, my fame, my country bid me bleed.
 —Oh! thou dear mourner! wherefore streams afresh
 That flood of woe? Why heaves with sighs renew'd
 That tender breast? Leonidas must fall.
 Alas! far heavier misery impends
 O'er thee and these, if softened by thy tears
 I shamefully refuse to yield that breath,
 Which justice, glory, liberty, and heav'n
 Claim for my country, for my sons, and thee.
 Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect
 On my paternal fondness. Has my heart
 E'er known a pause of love, or pious care?
 Now shall that care, that tenderness be prov'd
 Most warm and faithful. When thy husband dies
 For Lacedaemon's safety, thou wilt share;
 Thou and thy children, the diffusive good.
 Should I, thus singled from the rest of men,
 Alone intrusted by th' immortal Gods
 With pow'r to save a people, should my soul
 Desert that sacred cause, thee too I yield
 To sorrow, and to shame; for thou must weep
 With Lacedaemon, must with her sustain
 Thy painful portion of oppression's weight.
 Thy sons behold now worthy of their names,
 And Spartan birth. Their growing bloom must pine
 In shame and bondage, and their youthful hearts
 Beat at the sound of liberty no more.
 On their own virtue, and their father's fame,

When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,
 Before the world illustrious shall they rise,
 Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.

Here paus'd the patriot. With religious awe
 Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint
 The solemn silence broke. Tears ceas'd to flow:
 Ceas'd for a moment; soon again to stream.

For now in arms before the palace rang'd
 His brave companions of the war demand
 Their leader's presence; then her griefs renew'd,
 Too great for utterance, intercept her sighs,
 And freeze each accent on her falt'ring tongue.

In speechless anguish on the hero's breast
 He sinks. On ev'ry side his children press,
 Hang on his knees, and kiss his honour'd hand.
 His soul no longer struggles to confine

His strong compunction. Down the hero's cheek,
 Down flows the manly sorrow. Great in woe
 Amid his children, who inclose him round,
 He stands indulging tenderness and love
 In graceful tears; when thus with lifted eyes

Address'd to heav'n: Thou ever-living pow'r,
 Look down propitious, sire of gods and men!
 And to this faithful woman, whose desert
 May claim thy favour, grant the hours of peace.

And thou, my great forefather, son of Jove,
 O Hercules, neglect not these thy race!

But since that spirit, I from thee derive,
 Now bears me from them to resistless fate,
 Do thou support their virtue! be they taught

Like thee with glorious labour life to grace,
And from their father let them learn to die!

So saying, forth he issues, and assumes
Before the band his station of command.
They now proceed. So mov'd the host of heav'n
Down from Olympus in majestic march,
On Jove attendant to the flaming plains
Of Phlegra, there to face the giant sons
Of earth and Titan: he before them tow'r'd.
Thus through the streets of Lacedaemon pass'd
Leonidas. Before his footsteps bow
The multitude exulting. On he treads
Rever'd and honour'd. Their inraptur'd sight
Pursues his graceful stature, and their tongues
Extol and hail him as their guardian god.
Firm in his nervous hand he grasps his spear.
Down from his shoulders to his ankles hangs
The massy shield, and o'er his burnish'd helm
The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,
Around whose brows entwining laurels play'd,
In lofty-sounding strains his praise record;
While snowy-finger'd virgins all the ways
With od'rous garlands strew'd. His bosom now
Was all possess'd with glory, which dispell'd
Whate'er of grief remain'd, or fond regret
For those, he left behind. The rev'rend train
Of Lacedaemon's senate now approach'd
To give their solemn, last farewell, and grace
Their hero's parting steps. Around him flow'd
In civil pomp their venerable robes

Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The radiant troop
Of warriors press'd behind him. Maron here,
With Menalippus warm in flow'ry prime,
And Agis there with manly grace advanc'd,
Dieneces and Acarnania's seer,
Megistias sage. The Spartan dames ascend
The loftiest domes, and thronging o'er the roofs
Gaze on their sons and husbands, as they march.
So parted Argo from th' Iolchian strand,
And plough'd the foaming surge. Thessalia's nymphs
Their hills forsaking, and their hallow'd groves,
Rang'd on the cliffs, which overshade the deep,
Still on the distant vessel fix'd their sight;
Where Greece her chosen heroes had embark'd
To seek the dangers of the Colchian shore.

Swift on his course Leonidas proceeds.
Soon is Eurotas pass'd, and Lerna's banks,
Where his unconquer'd ancestor subdu'd
The many headed hydra, and with fame
Immortaliz'd the lake. Th' unwearied bands
Next through the pines of Maenalus he led,
And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.
Six days incessant thus the Spartans march,
When now they hear the hoarse resounding tide
Beat on the Isthmus. Here their tents they spread.
Below the wide horizon then the sun
Had sunk his beamy head. The queen of night
Gleam'd from the centre of th' etherial vault,
And o'er the dusky robe of darkness shed
Her silver light. Leonidas detains

Dieneces and Agis. Open stands
 The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.
 As here they fate conversing, from the hill,
 Which rose before them, one of noble port
 Appears with speed descending. Lightly down
 The slope he treads, and calls aloud. They heard,
 And knew the voice of Alpheus. From their seats
 They rose, and thus Leonidas began.

O thou, whom heav'n with swiftness hath endu'd
 To match the ardour of thy daring soul,
 What calls thee from the Isthmus? Do the Greeks
 Neglect to arm, nor face the public foe?

I come to meet thee (Alpheus thus return'd)
 A messenger, who gladsome tidings bears.
 Through Greece the voice of liberty is heard,
 And all unfold their banners in her cause;
 The Thebans only with reluctant hands.
 Arcadia's sons with morning shalt thou join,
 Who on the Isthmus wait thy great command.
 With Diophantus Mantinée sends
 Five hundred spears; nor less from Tegea's walls
 With Hegesander move. A thousand more,
 Who in Orchomenus reside, who range
 Along Parrhasius, and Cyllene's brow,
 Or near the foot of Erymanthus dwell,
 Or on Alpheus' banks, with various chiefs,
 Attend thy call; but most is Clonius fam'd
 Of stature huge: unshaken as a rock,
 His giant bulk the line of war sustains.
 Four hundred warriours brave Alcmaeon draws

From stately Corinth's tow'rs. Two hundred march
 From Phlius, whom Eupalamus commands.
 An equal number of Mycenae's race
 Aristobulus heads. Through fear alone
 Of thee, and threatning Greece the Thebans arm.
 To these inglorious Greeks myself repair'd
 Their dying sense of honour to recal.
 A few, corrupted by the Persian gold,
 Unjust dominion have usurp'd in Thebes.
 These in each bosom quell the gen'rous flame
 Of liberty. The eloquent they bribe;
 With specious tales the multitude they cheat;
 And prostitute the name of public good
 To veil oppression. Others are immers'd
 In all the sloth of riches, and unmov'd
 In shameful ease behold their country fall.
 I first implor'd their senate's instant aid,
 But they with artful wiles demanding time
 For consultation, I address'd them thus.
 The shortest moment may suffice to know,
 If to die free be better than to serve;
 But if, deluding Greece by vain delays,
 You mean to shew your friendship to the foe,
 You cannot then deliberate too long,
 How to withstand her swift-avenging wrath,
 Approaching with Leonidas. This heard,
 Four hundred warriors they appoint to march.
 The wily Anaxander is their chief,
 With Leontiades. I saw their march
 Begun, then hasten'd to survey the straits,

Which thou shalt render sacred to renown.
Where, ever mingling with the crumbling soil,
Which moulders round the Malian bay, the sea
In slimy surges rolls; upon the rock,
Which forms the utmost limit of the bay,
Thermopylae is stretch'd. Where broadest spread,
It measures threescore paces, bounded here
By the deep ooze, which underneath presents
Its dreary surface; there the lofty cliffs
Of woody Oeta overlook the pass,
And far beyond o'er half the surge below
Their horrid umbrage cast. Across the straits
An ancient bulwark of the Phocians stands,
A wall with turrets crown'd. In station here
I found the Locrians, and from Thespia's gates
Sev'n hundred more Demophilus hath led.
His brother's son attends him to the camp,
Young Dithyrambus greatly fam'd in war,
But more for temperance of mind renown'd;
Lov'd by his country, and with honours grac'd,
His early bloom with brightest glory shines,
Nor wantons in the blaze. Here Agis spake.

Well hast thou painted that illustrious youth.
He was my host at Thespia. Though adorn'd
With highest deeds, by fame and fortune crown'd,
His gentle virtues take from Envy's mouth
Its blasting venom, and her baneful face
Strives on his worth to smile. In silence all
Again remain, and Alpheus thus pursues.

A chosen troop hath bold Plataea sent,

Small in its numbers, but unmatch'd in arms.
Above the rest Diomedon their chief
Excels in prowess. Signal were his deeds
Upon that day of glory, when the fields
Of Marathon were hid with Persian slain.
These guard Thermopylae. Among the hills
A winding path to stranger's feet unknown
Affords another entrance into Greece:
This by a thousand Phocians is secur'd.

Here Alpheus paus'd. Leonidas embrac'd
The noble Spartan, and rejoin'd. Thou know'st,
What fate to me th'immortal gods ordain.
Frame now thy choice. Accompany our march,
Or go to Lacedaemon, and relate,
How thy discerning mind, and active limbs
Have serv'd thy country. From th' impatient mouth
Of Alpheus streight these fervent accents broke.

I have not measur'd such a tract of land,
Not look'd unwearied on the setting sun,
And through the shade of midnight urg'd my steps
To rouse the Greeks to battle, that myself
Might be exempted from the glorious toil.
Return? Oh! no. A second time my feet
Shall visit thee, Thermopylae, and there
With great Leonidas shall Alpheus find
An honourable grave. And oh! amid
His country's danger if a Spartan breast
May feel a private sorrow, not alone
For injur'd Greece I hasten to revenge,
But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope

Than I, or Maron bless'd our father's years,
Child of his age, and Polydorus nam'd.
His mind, while tender in its op'ning prime,
Was bent to rigid virtue. Gen'rous scorn
Of pain and danger taught his early strength
To struggle patient with severest toils.
Oft, when inclement winter chill'd the air,
And frozen show'rs had swoln Eurotas' stream,
Amid th' impetuous channel would he plunge,
And breast the torrent. On a fatal day,
As in the sea his active limbs he bath'd,
A servile corsair of the Persian king
My brother, naked and defenceless, bore
Ev'n in my sight to Asia, there to waste
With all the promise of its growing worth
His youth in bondage. Never can my tongue
My pains recount, much less my father's woes,
The days he wept, the sleepless nights he beat
His aged bosom. And shall Alpheus' spear
Be absent from Thermopylae, nor claim,
O Polydorus, vengeance for thy bonds
In that first slaughter of the barb'rous foe?

Here interpos'd Dienece. The hands
Of Alpheus and Leonidas he grasp'd,
And joyful thus. Your glory wants no more,
Than that Lycurgus should himself arise
To praise the virtue, which his laws inspire.

Thus pass'd these heroes, till the dead of night,
The hours in friendly converse, and enjoy'd
Each other's virtue; happiest of men!

At length with gentle heaviness the hand
Of sleep invades their eyelids. On the ground,
Oppress'd with slumber, they extend their limbs;
When, sliding down the hemisphere, the moon
Now plung'd in midnight gloom her silver head.

End of the First Book.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK II.

AURORA spread her purple beams around,
When mov'd the Spartans. Their approach is
known.

The Isthmian council, and the various chiefs,
Who led th' auxiliar bands, proceed to meet
Leonidas; Eupalamus the strong,
Alcmaeon, Clonius, Diophantus brave,
And Hegesander. At their head advanc'd
Aristobulus, whom Mycenae's youth
Attend to war; Mycenae once elate
With pow'r and dazzling wealth, and vaunting still
The name of Agamemnon, who along
The seas of Asia open'd to the wind
Unnumber'd sails and darken'd half the shore
Of trembling Phrygia with the hostile shade.
Aristobulus join'd the Spartan king,
And thus began. Leonidas, survey
Mycenae's race. Should ev'ry other Greek
Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his Asian host,
Believe not, we can fear, deriv'd from those,
Who once conducted o'er the foaming surge
The strength of Greece, who desert left the fields
Of ravag'd Asia, and her proudest walls
From their foundations humbled to the dust.
Leonidas replied not, but address'd

The chiefs around. Illustrious warriors, hail,
 Who thus undaunted signalize your faith,
 And gen'rous ardour in the common cause.
 But you, whose counsels prop the Grecian state,
 O venerable synod, whose decrees
 Have call'd us forth to vanquish, or to die,
 Thrice hail. Whate'er by valour we obtain
 Your wisdom must preserve. With piercing eyes
 Each Grecian state contemplate, and discern
 Their various tempers. Some with partial care
 To guard their own, neglect the public weal.
 Cold and unmov'd are others. Terror here,
 And there corruption reigns. O fire the brave
 With gen'rous zeal to quit their native walls,
 And join their valour in the gen'ral cause;
 Confirm the wav'ring; animate the cold,
 And watch the faithless: some there are, betray
 Themselves and Greece; their perfidy prevent,
 Or call them back to honour. Let us all
 Be link'd in sacred union, and the Greeks
 Shall stand the world's whole multitude in arms.
 If for the spoil, which Paris bore to Troy,
 A thousand barks the Hellespont o'erspread;
 Shall not again confederated Greece
 Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give,
 What once she gave to fame. Behold we haste
 To stop th'invading tyrant. Till we bleed,
 He shall not pour his millions on your plains.
 But, as the gods conceal, how long our strength
 May stand unconquer'd, or how soon must fall,
 Waste not a moment, till consenting Greece

Range all her free-born numbers in the field.

Leonidas concludes, when awful step'd
Before the sage assembly one, whose head
Was hoar with aged snow, and thus replied.

Thy great example ev'ry heart unites.
From thee her happiest omens Greece derives
Of concord, freedom, victory, and fame.
Go then, O first of mortals, and impress
Amaze and terrour in the Persian's breast;
The free-born Greeks instructing life to deem
Less dear than virtue, and their country's cause.

This heard, Leonidas, thy secret soul
Exulting tasted of the sweet reward
Due to thy name from endless time. His eyes
Once more he turn'd, and view'd in rapt'rous thought
His native land, which he alone can save:
Then summon'd all his majesty, and o'er
The Isthmus trod Behind the Grecians move
In deep arrangement. So th' imperial bark
With stately bulk along the beating tide
In military pomp conducts the pow'r
Of some proud navy bounding from the port
To bear the vengeance of a mighty state
Against a tyrant's walls. The Grecians march
Till noon, when halting, as they take repast,
Upon the plain before them they descry
A troop of Thespians. One above the rest
In eminence precedes. His glitt'ring shield,
Whose spacious orb collects th' effulgent beams,
Which from his throne meridian Phoebus cast,
Flames like another sun. A snowy plume

alls o'er his dazzling casque. In wanton curls,
Which floated in the breathing air, around
The lofty crest it wav'd. Approaching near
Beneath the honours of his radiant helm
The warrior now a countenance display'd,
Where youth in rosy prime with sweetness mix'd
His manly beauty. With such modest grace
Respectful near Leonidas he came,
As all ideas of his own desert

Were lost in veneration. Phoebus thus
Appears before his everlasting fire,
When from his altar in th'imbow'ring grove
Of palmy Delos, or the hallow'd bound
Of Tenedos, or Claros, where he hears
His hymns and praises from the sons of men,
He reascends the high Olympian seats;
Such reverential awe his brow invests,
Diffusing o'er the glowing flow'r of youth
New loveliness and grace. The king receives
Th'illustrious Thespian, and began. My tongue
Would call thee Dithyrambus, for thou bear'st
All in thy aspect to become that name
For valour known and virtue. O reveal
Thy birth and charge; whoe'er thou art, my soul
Desires to know thee, and would call thee friend.

To whom the youth return'd. O first of Greeks,
My name is Dithyrambus, which the lips
Of some benevolent and gen'rous friend
To thee have sounded with a partial voice,
And thou hast heard with favourable ears.

I come deputed by the Thespian chief,
The Theban, and the Locrian, and the brave
Diomedon, to hasten thy approach.

Three days will bring the Persian pow'rs in view.

He ceas'd. At once the standards are uprear'd.
The host 'till ev'ning with impetuous pace
Their march continue. Through the earliest dews
Of morning they proceed, and reach the pass,
E'er the fourth sun attain'd the sultry noon.
To their impatient fight no sooner rose
The rocks of Oeta, but with rapid feet,
And martial sounds of joy they rush'd along;
As if the present deity of fame,
With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,
And in her hand her adamantine trump,
Had from the hills her radiant form disclos'd,
And bade their valour hasten to the field;
That she their acts beholding might resound
Their name and glory o'er the earth and seas.
Before the van Leonidas advanc'd,
His eye confess'd the ardour of his mind,
Which thus found utterance from his eager lips.

All hail! Thermopylae, and you, the pow'rs,
Which here preside. All hail! ye silvan gods,
Ye fountain nymphs, who pour your lucid rills
In broken murmurs down the rugged steep.
Receive us, O benignant, and support
The cause of Greece. Conceal the secret paths,
Which o'er the crags, and through the forest wind,
Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone

By your immortal footsteps. O defend
 Your own recesses, nor let impious war
 Profane the solemn silence of your groves.
 Thus on your hills your praises shall you hear
 From those, whose deeds shall tell th'approving world;
 That not to undeservers did you grant
 Your high protection. You, my valiant friends
 Now rouse the gen'rous spirit, which inflames
 Your hearts; now prove the vigour of your arms:
 That your recorded actions may survive
 Within the breasts of all the brave and free,
 And sound delightful in the ear of Time,
 As long as Neptune beats the Malian bay,
 Or those tall cliffs erect their shaggy tops
 So near to heav'n, your monuments of fame.

As in some torrid region, where the head
 Of Ceres bends beneath its golden load,
 If on the parching ground a fatal spark
 Fall from a burning brand; the sudden blaze
 Increas'd and aided by tumultuous winds
 In rapid torrents of involving flames
 Sweeps o'er the crackling plain, and mounting high
 In ruddy spires illumines half the skies:
 Not with less swiftnefs through the glowing ranks
 The words of great Leonidas diffus'd
 A more than mortal fervour. Ev'ry heart
 Distends with great ideas, such as raise
 The patriot's virtue, and the soldier's fire,
 When danger in its most tremendous form
 Seems to their eyes most lovely, In their thoughts.

LEONIDAS. II. 182.

Imagination pictures all the scenes
Of war, the purple field, the heaps of death,
And glitt'ring trophies pil'd with Persian arms.

But now the Grecian leaders, who before
Were station'd near Thermopylae, accost
The Spartan king. The Thespian chief allied
To Dithyrambus first the silence broke,
An ancient warrior. From behind his casque,
Whose crested weight his aged temples press'd,
His slender hairs, which time had silver'd o'er,
Flow'd venerable down. He thus began.

Joy now shall crown the period of my days,
And whether with my father's dust I sleep,
Or slain by Persia's sword I press the earth,
Our common parent, be it, as the gods
Shall best determine. For the present hour
I bless their bounty, which has giv'n my age
To see the great Leonidas, and bid
The hero welcome on this glorious shore ;
Where he, by heav'n selected from mankind,
Shall fix the basis of the Grecian weal.

Here too the wily Anaxander spake.
Hail ! glorious chief. Of all the Theban race
We shall at least with gladsome bosoms meet
The great defender of the Grecian cause.
O ! may oblivion o'er the shame of Thebes
Its darkest wing extend, or they alone
Be curs'd by fame, whose impious counsels turn
Their countrymen from virtue. Thebes alas !
Still had been bury'd in dishonest sloth,

Had not to wake her languor Alpheus come
 The messenger of freedom. O accept
 Our grateful hearts ; thou, Alpheus, art the cause,
 That Anaxander from his native gates
 Here hath not borne a solitary spear,
 Nor these inglorious in their walls remain'd.
 But longer do we loiter ? Haste, my friends,
 To yonder cliff, which points its shade afar,
 And view the Persian camp. The morning sun
 Beheld their numbers hide th' adjacent plains.
 Lo ! here a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,
 Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath march'd.
 He said. His seeming virtue all deceiv'd.
 The camp not long had Epialtes join'd,
 By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue,
 But false his heart, and abject. He was skill'd
 To grace perfidious counsels, and to cloath
 In swelling phrase the baseness of his soul,
 Foul nurse of treasons. To the tents of Greece,
 Himself a Greek, a faithless spy he came.
 Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,
 The Theban chiefs, and nightly consult held,
 How best with consternation to deject
 The Spartan valour, or how best betray.
 With him the leaders climb the arduous hill,
 From whence the dreadful prospect they command,
 Where endless plains by white pavilions hid
 Spread, like the vast Atlantic, when no shore,
 No rock, or promontory stops the sight
 Unbounded, as it wanders ; but the moon

Resplendent eye of night in fullest orb
Throughout th' interminated surface throws
Its rays abroad, and decks in snowy light
The dancing billows; such was Xerxes' camp:
A pow'r unrivall'd by the greatest king,
Or conqueror, that e'er with ruthless hands
Dissolving all the sacred ties, which bind
The happiness of nations, have alarm'd
The sleeping fury Discord from her den.
Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes,
The tow'rs of Memphis, and the pregnant fields
By Nile's prolific torrents delug'd o'er,
E'er flow'd such armies with th' Egyptian lord
Renown'd Sesostris; who with trophies fill'd
The vanquish'd earth, and o'er the rapid foam
Of distant Tanais, and the huge expanse
Of trembling Ganges spread his dreaded name:
Nor yet in Asia's far extended bounds
E'er met such numbers, not when Belus drew
Th' Assyrian bands to conquest, or the pride
Of high-exalted Babylon survey'd
The plains along Euphrates cover'd wide
With armed myriads swarming from her walls;
When at the rage of dire Semiramis
Peace fled affrighted from the ravag'd East.
Yet all this hideous face of war dismays
No Grecian heart. Unterrified they stood.
Th' immeasurable camp with fearless eyes,
They traverse, while in meditation near
The treach'rous Malian waits, collecting all

His pomp of words to paint the hostile pow'r ;
 Nor yet with falshood arms his fraudulent tongue
 To feign a tale of terrour : Truth herself
 Beyond the reach of fiction to inhance
 Now aids his treason, and with cold dismay
 Might pierce the boldest breast, unless secur'd
 By dauntless virtue, which disdains to live
 From liberty divorc'd. Requested now
 By ev'ry voice, the traitor spake, and all
 Attentive ears incline. Oh ! Greeks and friends !
 Can I behold my native Malian fields
 Presenting hostile millions to your sight,
 And not with grief suppress the horrid tale,
 Which you exact from these ill-omen'd lips.
 On Thracia's sands I first beheld the foe,
 When, joining Europe with the Asian shore,
 A mighty bridge th' outrageous waves restrain'd,
 And stem'd th' impetuous current ; while in arms
 The universal progeny of men
 Seem'd all before me trampling o'er the sea
 By thousands and ten thousands : Persians, Medes,
 Assyrians, Saces, Indians, swarthy files
 From Æthiopia, Egypt's tawny sons,
 Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the strength
 Of Lybia, and of Asia. Neptune groan'd
 Beneath the burthen, and indignant heav'd
 His neck against th' incumbent weight. In vain
 The violence of Boreas and the East,
 With rage combin'd, against th' unshaken pile
 Dash'd half the Hellespont. The eastern world

Sev'n days and nights uninterrupted pass,
 And pour on Thracia's confines. They accept
 The Persian lord, and range their hardy race
 Beneath his standards. Macedonia's youth
 With all Thassalia next, and ev'ry Greek,
 Who dwells beyond Thermopylae, attend.
 Thus not alone embodied Asia lifts
 Her threatening lance, but Macedon and Thrace,
 Whose martial loins with daring warriors teem,
 And faithless Greeks in multitudes untold
 The Persian monarch aid. Celestial pow'rs!
 And thou, who reignest over men and gods,
 Who in a moment by thy will supreme
 Canst quell the mighty in their proudest hopes,
 And raise the weak to safety, thou impart
 Thy instant succour; interpose thy arm;
 With lightning blast their legions: Oh! confound
 With triple bolted thunder Persia's camp,
 Whence like an inundation with the morn
 Shall millions rush, and overwhelm the Greeks.
 Resistance else were vain against an host,
 Which covers all Thessalia; for beyond
 The Malian plains thus widely stretcht below,
 Beyond the utmost measure of the sight
 Bent from the height of this aspiring cliff,
 Lie yet more hideous numbers, which might drain
 The streams of copious rivers with their thirst,
 And with their arrows hide the mid-day sun.

Then shall we join our battle in the shade,
 Dienece's replied. Not calmly thus

Diomedon. On Xerxes camp he bends
His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er,
And thus exclaim'd. Bellona, turn and view
With joyful eyes that field, the fatal stage,
Which regal madness hath for you prepar'd
To exercise your horrors. Thou, O Death,
Shalt riot here unceasing, when the rocks
Of yonder pass with bleeding ranks are strew'd;
And all, who shun th'avenging steel of Greece,
By pestilence and meagre famine seiz'd,
Shall with variety of ruin feast
Thy unabated hunger. Thus he spake,
While on the host immense his gloomy eyes
He fix'd disdainful, and its strength defied.
Meantime within th'entrenchment of the Greeks,
From Asia's monarch delegated, came
Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hills
Leonidas conducts th' impatient chiefs.
Around the hero in his tent they throng,
When thus Tigranes their attention calls.

Ambassadors from Persia's king we stand
Before you, Grecians. To display the pow'r
Of our great master were a needless task.
The name of Xerxes, Asia's mighty lord,
Invincible, and seated on a throne
Surpassing human lustre, must have reach'd
Th'extremest border of the earth, and taught
The hearts of men to own resistless force
With awe and low submission. Yet I swear
By yon refulgent orb, which flames above,

The glorious symbol of th' eternal pow'r,
 This military throng, this shew of war
 Persuade me, you have never heard that name,
 At whose dread sound the billows wide remote
 Of Indus tremble, and the Caspian wave,
 Th' Ægyptian tide, and Hellespontic surge
 With homage roll. O impotent and rash!
 Whom yet the large beneficence of heav'n,
 And our great monarch merciful and kind
 Deign to preserve. Resign your arms; disperse
 Each to your cities; there with humblest hands
 Before your lord bestrew the way with flow'rs.

As through th' extensive grove, whose leafy boughs
 Intwining crown some eminence with shade,
 The tempests rush sonorous, and between
 The crashing branches roar; by fierce disdain
 And indignation thus the Grecians mov'd
 With clam'rous murmurs close the Persian's speech.
 But, Sparta's king arising, all is hush'd
 In sudden silence; when he thus replied.

O Persian, when to Xerxes thou return'st,
 Say, thou hast told the wonders of his pow'r;
 Then say, thou saw'st a slender band of Greece,
 Which dares his boasted millions to the field.

The Spartan said. Th' ambassadors retire.
 Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines
 Diomedon and Thespia's youth conduct.
 With slow solemnity they all proceed
 In fullen silence. But their looks denote,
 What speech would shame and weaken. Wrath contracts

The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth
Gnash with impatience for delay'd revenge.
Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd
The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face
Of either Persian insolence and pride,
Incens'd by disappointment, gloomy low'r'd.
But when they reach'd the limits of the straits,
Where Xerxes' camp began to open wide
Its deep, immense arrangement; then the heart
Of vain Tigranes, swelling at the sight,
Thus overflows in loud and haughty phrase.

O Arimanius, origin of ill,
Have we demanded of thy ruthless pow'r
Thus with the curse of madness to afflict
These wretched men? But since thy dreadful will
To irresistible perdition dooms
The sons of Greece, in vain should we oppose.
Be thy dire will accomplish'd, let them fall,
And fatten with their blood their native soil.

Enrag'd, the stern Diomedon replies.
Thou servile, base dependent on a king,
Inglorious mercenary, slave to those,
Whom-most we scorn, thou boaster, dost thou know,
That I beheld the Marathonian-field;
When, like the Lybian sands before the wind,
Your host was scatter'd by th' unconquer'd Greeks;
Where thou perhaps didst turn before this arm
To ignominious flight thy shiv'ring limbs?
O may I find thee in to-morrow's fight!
Then on this rocky pavement shalt thou lie

Beneath this arm to feast the vulture's beak.

He ended here, and thus the Persian chief.

O thou, whose hand omnipotent protects
The throne of Xerxes, bend thy sacred ear!
For lo! my first victorious fruits of war
To thee I here devote, the gory spoils,
Which from this Grecian with the rising dawn
In sight of either host my arm shall rend.

Phraortes interrupting then began.

I too would find among the Grecian chiefs
One, who in battle dare abide my spear.

To him thus answer'd Thespia's gallant youth.
Thou look'st on me, O Persian. Worthier far
Thou might'st indeed have singled from our host,
But none more willing to essay thy force.
Yes, I will prove before the eye of Mars,
How far the valour of the meanest Greek
Beyond thy vaunts deserves the palm of fame.

This said, the Persians to their king repair,
Back to their camp the Grecians. There they found
Each soldier poising his extended spear,
And his large buckler bracing on his arm,
For instant war prepar'd. Through all the files
Each leader moves exulting, and with praise
And exhortations, aids their native warmth.
Alone the Theban Anaxander pin'd,
Who thus apart address'd his Malian friend.

What has thy lofty eloquence avail'd,
Alas! in vain attempting to confound
The Spartan valour? With redoubled fires

See how their bosoms glow. They wish to die,
 And wait impatient for th' unequal fight.
 Too soon will come th' insuperable foes,
 And in promiscuous ruin all be whelm'd;
 Nor shall our merit to the Persian lord
 Be told, or known: for whose advent'rous feet
 To serve the Thebans, through the guarded pass,
 The Grecian watch eluding, will approach
 The tents of Asia, that the king may know,
 And spare his friends amid the gen'ral wreck;
 When his high-swoln resentment, like a flood,
 Increas'd with stormy show'rs, shall cover Greece
 With desolation? Epialtes here.

Whence, Anaxander, this unjust despair?
 Is there a path on Oeta's hills unknown
 To Epialtes? O'er the trackless rock,
 And mazy grove shall pass my secret steps.
 This night I part. Thy merit shall be told
 To Persia's king. Thou only watch the hour,
 Nor then be tardy, when he wants thy aid.

End of the Second Book.

L E O N I D A S.

B O O K III.

NOW had Tigranes and Phraortes gain'd
The splendid tent of Xerxes. Him they found
Begirt with princes, and illustrious chiefs,
The potentates of Asia. Near his side
His valiant brothers stood, Abrocomes,
And Hyperanthes, then Pharnuchus brave,
Pandates, Intaphernes, mighty lords,
And numbers more in purple splendour clad,
With homage all attending round the throne,
Whose gorgeous seat erected high upbore
Their regal master. He above their heads
Look'd down imperious. So the stately tow'r
Of Belus, mingling its majestic front
With heav'n's bright azure, from on high survey'd
The huge extent of Babylon with all
Its sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.
That day the monarch deem'd to enter Greece,
And hide her fields with war; but first ordains,
That grateful hymns should celebrate the name
Of Oromasdes: so the Persians call'd
The world's great author. By the king's decree
The Magi stood before th' unfolded tent.
Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rd the sacred flame
They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heav'n.

From Zoroastres was the song deriv'd,
 Who on the hills of Persia from his cave
 With flow'rs incircled, and with murn'ring founts,
 That chear'd the solemn mansion, had reveal'd,
 How Oromasdes, radiant source of good,
 Original, immortal fram'd the globe
 With all its varied beauty : how with stars
 By him the heav'ns were spangled : how the sun,
 Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light,
 And genial warmth, whence fruitful nature smiles,
 Burst from the east at his creating voice ;
 When streight beyond the golden verge of day
 Night shew'd the horrors of her distant reign,
 Whence black, and hateful Arimanius sprung,
 The author foul of evil : he with shades
 From his dire mansion veil'd the earth and skies,
 Or to destruction chang'd the solar beam,
 When parching fields deny the foodful grain,
 And from their channels fly th'exhaling streams,
 Whence pestilence and famine : how the pow'r
 Of Oromasdes in the human breast
 Benevolence, and equity infus'd,
 Truth, temperance, and wisdom sprung from heav'n ;
 When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul
 With falshood, and injustice, with desires
 Insatiable, with violence, and rage,
 Malignity, and folly. If the hand
 Of Oromasdes on precarious life
 Shed wealth and pleasure, soon th'infernal god
 With wild excess, or av'rice blasts the joy.

Thou, Oromasdes, victory dost give.
By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.
Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When with storms
The hate of direful Arimanius swell'd
The Hellespont, thou o'er the angry surge
The destin'd master of the world didst lead
This day his promis'd glories to enjoy,
When Greece affrighted to his arms shall bend,
Ev'n as at last shall Arimanius fall
Before thy might, and evil be no more.

The Magi ceas'd their harmony; when now
Before the king with adoration bow'd
Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay,
And o'er their foreheads spread their abject hands,
As from a present deity, too bright
For mortal vision, to conceal their eyes.
At length in humble phrase Tigranes thus.

O Xerxes, live for ever! Gracious lord!
Who dost permit thy servants to approach
Thy awful sight, and prostrate thus to own
Thy majesty and greatness. May the pow'r
Of Oromasdes stretch thy scepter'd arm
O'er all the nations from the Indian shores,
Ev'n to the waters of the western main,
From northern Tanaïs to the source of Nile!
And still from thee may Arimanius turn
Against thy foes his malice to mankind!
By him, even now with phrenzy smote, the Greeks
Reject thy proffer'd clemency. The morn
Shall see them bleed the victims of thy wrath.

Here, to his brothers turning, Xerxes spake.
Say, Hyperanthes? Does thy soul believe
These tidings? Sure these slaves have never dar'd
To face the Grecians, but delude our ear
With base impostures, which their fears suggest.

To him this answer Hyperanthes form'd.
O from his servants may the king avert
His indignation! Greece was fam'd of old
For martial virtue, and intrepid sons:
I have essay'd their valour, and with me
Abrocomes can witness. When our sire,
The great Darius, to th' Athenian shore
With Artaphernes, and with Datis sent
Our tender youth; at Marathon we found,
How vain the hopes, that numbers should dismay
A foe resolv'd on victory, or death.

Yet not as one contemptible, or base
Let me appear before thee: though the Greeks
With such unconquer'd spirits be indu'd,
Soon as the king shall summon me to war,
He shall behold me in the dang'rous van
Exalt my spear, and pierce the hostile ranks,
Or sink before them. Xerxes then return'd;

Why over Asia, and the Libyan soil,
With all their nations does my potent arm
Extend its scepter? Wherefore do I sweep
Across the globe with millions in my train?
Why shade the Ocean with unnumber'd sails?
Whence all this pow'r, unless th' eternal will
Had doom'd to give one master to the world,

And that the earth's extremity alone
 Should bound my empire? He for this reduc'd
 Revolted Egypt, and enlarg'd my sway
 With sandy Libya, and the sultry clime
 Of Æthiopia. He for this subdu'd
 The Hellefpontic rage, and taught the sea
 Obedience to my pow'r. Then cease to think,
 That heav'n, deserting now the cause of kings,
 Those despicable Grecians will inspire
 With courage more than human, and expunge
 The common fears of nature from their breasts.
 He ceas'd, when thus Abrocomes began.

The king commands us to reveal our hearts:
 Then may the sun to lightning change his beams,
 And blast my head with ruin; may the king
 Look on his servant with a loathing eye,
 If, what I here affirm, be false, or vain,
 That yonder Grecians will oppose our course.

The king arose. No more: prepare my car;
 The Spartan exile Demaratus call:
 We will ourselves advance and view the foe.

The monarch will'd; and suddenly he hears
 His trampling horses. High on silver wheels
 The iv'ry car with azure sapphires shone,
 Caerulean beryls, and the jasper green,
 The emerald, the ruby's glowing blush,
 The flaming topaz with its golden beam,
 The pearl, th'impurpled amethyst, and all
 The various gems, which India's mines afford
 To deck the pomp of kings. In burnish'd gold

A sculptur'd eagle from behind displays
 Its stately neck, and o'er the monarch's head
 Extend its dazzling wings. Eight gen'rous steeds,
 Which on the fam'd Nysæan plain were nurs'd
 In wintry Media, drew the radiant car.
 Not those of old to Hercules refus'd
 By false Laomedon, nor they, which bore
 The son of Thetis through the scatter'd rear
 Of Troy's devoted race, might these surpass
 In strength, or beauty. With obedient pride
 They heard their lord: exulting in the air
 They toss'd their foreheads, while the silver manes
 Smote on their glitt'ring necks. The king ascends:
 Beside his footstool Demaratus fate.
 The charioteer now shakes the golden reins,
 Strong Patiramphes. At the signal bound
 Th' attentive steeds; the chariot flew; behind;
 Ten thousand horse in thunder swept the field.
 The eastern bands (so Xerxes had ordain'd)
 Between the sea-beat margin, and the camp
 All wait imbattled, all prepar'd to pass
 Thermopylae. To these with rapid wheels
 Th' imperial car proceeds. Th' approaching king
 Soon through the wide battalions is proclaim'd.
 He now draws nigh. Th' innumerable host
 Roll back by nations, and admit their lord
 With all his satraps. From his crystal dome
 Rais'd on the bottom of the watry world
 Thus when the potent ruler of the floods
 With each caerulean deity ascends,

Thron'd on his pearly chariot ; all the deep
 Divides its bosom to th' emerging god.
 So Xerxes rode between the Asian world
 On either side receding ; when, as down
 Th' immeasurable ranks his sight was lost,
 A momentary gloom o'ercast his mind,
 While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears :
 That soon, as Time an hundred years had told,
 Not one of all those thousands should survive.
 Whence to obscure thy pride arose that cloud ?
 Was it, that once humanity could touch
 A tyrant's breast ? or rather did thy soul
 Repine, O Xerxes, at the bitter thought,
 That all thy pow'r was mortal ? But the veil
 Of sadness soon forsook his brightning eyes,
 As with adoring homage millions bow'd,
 And to his heart relentless pride recall'd.
 Elate the mingled prospect he surveys
 Of glitt'ring files unnumber'd, chariots scyth'd
 On thund'ring axles roll'd with haughty steeds
 In sumptuous trappings clad (Barbaric pomp)
 Which tore with spurning hoofs the sandy beach ;
 While ev'ry banner to the sun expands
 Its gorgeous folds, that beam'd with gold, with shields,
 Tiaras, helms environ'd, and with spears
 In number equal to the bladed grass.
 Whose living green in vernal beauty cloaths
 Thessalia's vale. What pow'rs of founding verse
 Can to the mind present th' amazing scene ?
 Not thee, whom Rumour's fabling voice delights,

poetic Fancy, to my aid I call ;

Thou, historic Truth, support my song,

Which shall the various multitude display,

Their arms, their manners, and their native seats.

The Persians first in scaly corselets shone

With colours varying on the gorgeous sleeves,

A gen'rous nation. From their infant age

Their tongues were practis'd in the love of truth,

Their limbs inur'd to ev'ry manly toil,

To brace the bow, to rule th' impetuous steed,

And dart the javelin; worthy to enjoy

The liberty, their injur'd fathers lost,

Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength

Of Babylon and Sardis, and advanc'd

The victor's head above his country's laws:

Such were the Persians; but, untaught to form

The ranks of battle, with unequal force

Against the phalanx of the Greeks they stood,

And to the massy shield, and weighty spear

A target light, and slender lance oppos'd.

On ev'ry head tiaras rose, like tow'rs,

Impenetrable. All with burnish'd gold

Blaz'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins

Of each proud courser. Daggers from their thighs,

A well-stor'd quiver from their shoulders hung,

And strongest bows of mighty size they bore.

Next, with resembling arms the Medes are seen,

The Cissians, and Hircanians. Media once

From her bleak mountains aw'd the subject East.

Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd.

The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,
From sultry fields o'erspread with branching palms,
And white with lillies, water'd by the tides
Of fam'd Choaspes, whose transparent waves
The golden goblet wafts to Persia's kings:
No other stream the royal lip bedews.
Hyrcania's race forsook their fruitful clime
Dark with the verdure of expanding oaks,
To Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,
Bent by its golden burthen, sheds unreap'd
Its plenteous seed impregnating the soil
With future harvests; while the bees reside
Among th'intwining branches of the groves,
Where with their labours they enrich the leaves,
Which flow with sweetness. Next Assyria's sons
Their brazen helms display, th'unskilful work
Of rude Barbarians. Thick-wove flax defends
Their chest and loins. A buckler guards their arm.
Girt with a falchion, each a mace sustains
O'erlaid with iron. On Euphrates' banks
In Babylon's stupendous walls they dwell,
And o'er the plains, where once with mightier tow'rs
Old Ninus rear'd its head, th'imperial seat
Of eldest tyrants. These Chaldaea joins,
The land of shepherds. On the pastures wide
There Belus first discern'd the various course
Of heav'n's bright planets, and the clust'ring stars
With names distinguish'd, whence himself was deem'd
The chief of gods. His heav'n-ascending fane
In Babylon the proud Assyrians rais'd.

Drawn from the fertile soil, which Ochus laves,
 The Bactrians stood, like Persia's bands attir'd,
 Though less their javelins, and their bows of cane;
 The Paricanians next all rough with hides
 Of shaggy goats, with bows and daggers arm'd.
 Alike in horrid garb the Caspian train
 From barren mountains, and the dreary coast,
 Which bounds the stormy lake, that bears their name,
 With many bows, and scymetars were led.
 The Indians then, a threefold band, appear'd.
 Part guide the horse, and part the rapid car;
 The rest on foot within the bending cane
 For slaughter held their iron-pointed reeds.
 These o'er the Indus from the distant floods
 Of Ganges pass'd, and left a region lov'd
 By lavish nature. There the plenteous year
 Twice crown'd with harvest smiles. The honey'd shrub,
 The cinnamon, and spikenard bless their fields.
 Array'd in native wealth, the warriors shone.
 Their ears were grac'd with pendants, and their hands
 Encircled wore a bracelet starr'd with gems.
 These were the nations, who to Xerxes sent
 Their mingled aids of infantry and horse.

Now, Muse, recount, what numbers yet untold
 On foot obscur'd the surface of the shore;
 Or who in chariots, or on camels beat
 The loosen'd sand. The Parthians first advance,
 Then weak in numbers o'er the Malian strand
 Far from their lonely vales, and woody hills,
 Not yet renown'd for warlike steeds, they trod.

With them the Sogdians, Dadices arrang'd,
Gandarians, and Chorasmians, all attir'd,
Like Bactria's sons. To these the Saces join,
From cold Imaüs drawn, from Oxus' waves,
And Cyra built on Iäxartes' brink,
The bound of Persia's empire. Wild, untam'd,
And prone to rage, their desarts they forsook.
A bow, a falchion, and a pond'rous ax
The savage legions arm'd. A pointed casque
O'er each grim visage rear'd its iron cone.
In arms, like Persians, the Saranges stood.
High as the knee their buskin stretch'd, and clung
Around their ham. With glowing colours dy'd,
Gay shone their varied garments. Next are seen
The Pactian, Mycian, and the Utian train
In skins of goats, all horrid. Bows they wield
Of springy reed, with poniards at their sides.
With spotted hides of leopards all array'd,
Or with the spoil from tawny lions torn
In graceful range the Æthiopians stand
Of equal stature, and a beauteous frame;
Though scorching Phoebus had imbrown'd their face,
And curl'd their crisped locks. In ancient song
Renown'd for justice, riches they disdain'd,
As foes to virtue. From their seat remote
On Nilus' verge above th' Ægyptian bound,
Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,
These friends of hospitality and peace,
Themselves uninjur'd, wag'd reluctant war
Against a land, whose climate, and whose name

To them were strange. With hardest stone they point
 The rapid arrow. Bows of hideous length,
 Form'd with th' elastic branches of the palm,
 They bore, and lances arm'd with horns of goats,
 And maces strong with iron. Now, O Muse,
 Recite the nations, who in helmets fram'd
 Of various parts, and close-connected joints,
 With darts, and poniards, shields, and lances weak,
 Feeble train, attend their tyrant's will,
 All victims destin'd to imbrue with gore
 The Grecian spears; the Paphlagonians first
 From where Carambis with projected brows
 Overlooks the dusky Euxine wrapt in mists,
 And where through flow'rs, that paint its various banks,
 Parthenius flows; the Mariandynians next,
 The Matienian, and the Ligyan bands.
 With them the Syrian multitudes, who dwell
 Near Daphne's grove, who cultivate the glebe
 Wide-water'd by Orontes, who along
 Th' extended ridge of Libanus are nurs'd
 Among the cedars, or with foodful dates
 Pluck'd from the palms, whose fruitage grac'd the plains
 Around Damascus: all, who bear the name
 Of Cappadocians, swell the Syrian host,
 With those, who gather from the fragrant shrub
 The aromatic balsam, and extract
 Its milky juice along the lovely side
 Of winding Jordan, till immers'd it sleep
 Beneath the pitchy surface, which obscures
 Th' Asphaltic lake. The Phrygians then advance,

To them their antient colony is join'd,
 Th' Armenian bands. These see the bursting springs
 Of strong Euphrates cleave the yielding earth,
 And wide in lakes expanding hide the plain.
 Thence with collected waters fierce and deep
 Its passage rending through diminish'd rocks
 To Babylon it foams. Not so the wave
 Of soft Araxes to the Caspian glides.
 But, stealing imperceptibly, it laves
 The fruitful herbage of Armenia's meads.

Next, strange to view, in similar attire,
 Though far unlike in manners to the Greeks,
 Appear the Lydians. Wantonness and sport
 Were all their care. Beside Cayster's stream,
 Or smooth Maeander winding silent by,
 Or near Pactolus' wave among the vines
 Of Tmolus rising, or the wealthy tide
 Of golden-sanded Hermus they allure
 The sight enchanted with the graceful dance,
 Or with melodious sweetness charm the air,
 And melt to softest languishment the soul.
 What to the battle's danger could incite
 These tender sons of luxury? The lash
 Of their stern monarch urg'd their shiv'ring limbs
 Through all the tempests, which enrag'd the main,
 And shook beneath their trembling steps the pile,
 That join'd the Asian and the western worlds.
 To these Maconia hot with sulph'rous mines
 Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields
 Unblest'd with verdure, and with ashes strewn.

Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd
 With conflagration. Helmets press their brows.
 Two darts they brandish'd. Round their woolly vest
 A sword was girt, and hairy hides compos'd
 Their bucklers round and light. The Mysians left
 Olympus wood-invelop'd, and the soilt
 Wash'd by Caïcus, and the baneful tide
 Of Lycus, nurse of serpents. Targets, helms,
 And wooden jav'lines harden'd in the flames
 They bore. By these, imbattled next are seen
 An antient nation, who in early times,
 By Trojan arms assail'd, their native land
 Esteem'd less dear than freedom, and exchange'd
 Their seat on Strymon, where in Thrace it pours
 Its freezing current, for the distant shores
 Of fishy Sangar. These Bithynians nam'd
 Their habitations to the sacred feet
 Of Dindymus extend. Yet there they groan'd
 Beneath oppression, and their freedom mourn'd
 On Sangar now, as once on Strymon lost.
 The ruddy skins of foxes form'd their casque;
 Their shields were fashion'd like the horned moon;
 A dart, and slender poniard arm'd their hands;
 A vest embrac'd their bodies, while abroad,
 Tint'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd,
 But other Thracians, who their former name
 Retain'd in Asia, stood with shining helms.
 The horns of bulls in imitating brass
 Adorn'd the lofty crest. Phoenician cloth
 Their legs infolds, with brightest purple stain'd;

And through the forest went to chase the boar,
 A hunter's spear they grasp.—What nations still
 On either side of Xerxes, while he pass'd,
 Present their huge array, and swell his soul
 With more than mortal pride? The num'rous train
 Of Moschians and Macronians now succeed,
 And Mosynoecians, who, with berries fed,
 In wooden tow'rs along the Pontic shore
 Repose their painted limbs; the mirthful race
 Of Tibarenians next, whose wanton minds
 Delight in sport, and laughter: all in casques
 Of wood, with shields, and lances small, whose points
 Beyond proportion lengthen: Then approach,
 In garments o'er their spacious bosom clasp'd,
 And part with javelins, part with Lycian bows,
 A people destin'd in eternal verse,
 Ev'n thine, sublime Maconides, to live.
 These are the Milyans, Solymi their name:
 In thy celestial strains, Pisidia's hills
 Their dwelling. Once, a formidable train,
 They fac'd the great Bellerophon in war,
 Now doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet,
 Themselves unnerv'd with bondage, and to leave
 Their putrid bodies for the dogs of Greece.
 Next are the Marian legions furnish'd all
 With shields of skins, with darts, and helmets wove
 Of strongest texture. Aria's host pretend
 The Bactrian lance, and brace the Persian bow,
 Drawn from a region horrid all with thorn,
 One hideous waste of sands, which mock the toil

Of patient culture; save one favour'd spot,
Which, like an isle, emerges from the wild,
In verdure clad, and interspers'd with vines,
Whose gen'rous clusters yield a juice, that scorns
The injuries of time. Yet nature's hand
Had sown their rocks with coral, and enrich'd
Their desert hills with veins of sapphirs blue,
And those, whose azure sparks of gold adorn.
These from the turbant flame. On ev'ry neck
The coral blushes through the num'rous throng.
The Allarodians, and Sasperian bands
Were arm'd with poniards like the Colchian host;
Their heads were guarded with a helm of wood:
Short were their spears, of hides undress'd their shields.
The Colchians march'd from Phasis, and the shores,
Where once Medea, fair enchantress, stood,
And wond'ring view'd the first advent'rous bark,
That stem'd the Pontic foam. From Argo's side
The demigods descended, and repair'd
To her fell fire's inhospitable walls.
His blooming graces Jason there display'd.
With ev'ry art of eloquence divine
He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard,
He gaz'd with fatal ravishment, and lov'd.
Then to the hero she resigns her heart;
Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls;
He lulls the sleepless dragon, and to Greece
With faithless Jason wafts the radiant prize.
The Colchians then pursu'd their steps with war,
And now with antient enmity inflam'd,

Or else compell'd by Xerxes to recal
 The long-forgotten wrong, they menace Greece
 With desolation. Next in Persian guise
 A croud advanc'd, who lest the various isles
 In Persia's gulph, and round Arabia known,
 Some in their native topaz were adorn'd,
 From Ophiodes, and Topazos sprung;
 And some with shells of tortoises, which brood
 Around Casitis' verge. To them were join'd
 Those, who reside, where Erythras intomb'd
 Lies all beset with palms, a pow'rful king,
 Who nam'd of old the Erythraean main.
 The Lybians next are plac'd. In chariots scyth'd
 They sat terrific, cloath'd in skins, with darts
 Of wood well-temper'd in the hardning flames.
 Not Lybia's desarts from tyrannic sway
 Could hide her sons; much less could freedom dwell
 Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields:
 Where spicy cassia, and the fragrant reed,
 And myrrh, and hallow'd frankincense perfume
 The zephyr's wing. A bow of largest size
 Th' Arabians wield, and o'er their lucid vest
 Loose floats a mantle on their shoulder clasp'd.
 Of these two myriads on the lofty back
 Of camel's rode, that match'd the swiftest horse.

Such were the numbers, which, from Asia led,
 Bow'd down with low prostration to the wheels
 Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more
 Expand their mighty range? What banners still
 The Malian sands o'ershadow? Forward rolls

The regal car through nations, which in arms,
And order'd ranks unlike the eastern throng
Upheld the spear and buckler. Yet untaught
To bend the servile knee erect they stood;
Unless that mourning o'er the shameful weight
Of their new bondage some their brows depress'd,
And stain'd their arms with sorrow. Europe's race
Were these, whom Xerxes by resistless force
Had gather'd to his standards. Murm'ring here,
The sons of Thrace and Macedonia stood,
Here on his steed the brave Thessalian frown'd:
There pin'd reluctant multitudes, who bore
The name of Greeks, and peopled all the coast
Between Byzantium, and the Malian bay.

Through all the numbers, which ador'd his pride,
Or fear'd his pow'r, the monarch now was pass'd;
Nor yet among those myriads could be found
One, who with Xerxes' self in tow'ring size,
Or beauteous features might compare, possess'd
Of all but virtue; doom'd to shew how mean,
How weak without her is unbounded pow'r,
The charm of beauty, and the blaze of state,
How insecure of happiness, how vain.
Thou, who couldst mourn the common lot, which heav'n
From none withholds; which oft to thousands proves
Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage;
And which by pining sickness, age, or pain
Becomes at last a soothing hope to all;
Thou, who could'st weep, that nature's gentle hand
Should lay her wearied offspring in the tomb,

Yet couldst remorseless from their peaceful seats
 Lead half the nations in a clime unknown
 To fall the victims of thy ruthless pride;
 What didst thou merit from the injur'd world?
 What suff'rings to compensate for the tears
 Of Asia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,
 And all this waste of nature? On his host
 The king exulting bends his haughty sight,
 When thus to Demaratus he began.

Now, Demaratus, to thy soul recal
 My father, great Darius, who receiv'd
 Thy wand'ring steps expell'd their native home.
 Ill would it then become thee to beguile
 Thy benefactors, and the truth disguise.
 Look back on all those thousands, and declare,
 If yonder Grecians will oppose their march.

The exile answer'd. Deem not, mighty lord,
 I will deceive thy goodness by a tale
 Forg'd for their glory, whose deluded minds
 Perversely hearken'd to the slanderer's tongue;
 Who forc'd me with unmerited disgrace
 To tread the paths of banishment and woe.
 Nor be the king offended, while I speak
 The words of truth. The Spartans never fly.

Here with contemptuous smiles the king return'd,
 Wilt thou, who once wert Lacedaemon's chief,
 Encounter twenty Persians? Yet those Greeks
 With greater disproportion must confront
 Our host to-morrow. Demaratus thus.

By single combat were the trial vain,

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And vainer still by my unworthy sword,
To prove the merit of united force,
Which oft by military skill surmounts
The strength of numbers. Nor in fields of war
The Greeks excel by discipline alone,
But from their manners. Grant thy ear, O king,
The diff'rence learn of Grecian bands, and thine.
The flow'r, the bulwark of thy pow'rful host
Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round
Thy provinces. No fertile field demands
Their painful hand to turn the fallow glebe.
Them to the noon-day toil no harvest calls,
The stubborn oak along the mountains brow
Sinks not beneath their stroke. With careful eyes
They mark not how the flocks, or heifers feed,
To them, of wealth and all possessions void,
The name of country with an empty sound
Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyless hearts,
Who share no country. Needy, yet with scorn
Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,
Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs
Soft and enervate, and with minds corrupt;
From misery, debauchery, and sloth
Are these to battle drawn against a foe
Inur'd to hardship, and the child of toil;
Wont through the freezing show'r, and wint'ry storm
O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,
Or in the sun's impetuous heat to glow
Beneath the burden of the yellow sheaves:
Whence on himself, on her, whose faithful arms

Infold him joyful, and a num'rous race,
 Which glads his dwelling, plenty he bestows
 With independence: and, when call'd to war,
 For these his dearest comfort, and his care,
 And for the harvest promis'd to his toil,
 He lifts the shield, nor shuns unequal force:
 Such are the pow'rs of ev'ry state in Greece:
 One onely breeds a race more warlike still,
 Ev'n those, who now defend that rocky pass,
 The sons of Lacedaemon. They untaught
 To break the glebe, or bind the golden sheaves,
 To far severer labours are inur'd,
 Alone for war, their sole delight, and care.
 From infancy to manhood are they form'd
 To want, and danger; to th' unwholsome ground,
 To winter watches, and inclement skies,
 To plunge through torrents, brave the tusky boar,
 To arms, and wounds; an exercise of pain
 So fierce and constant, that to them a camp
 With all its hardships is the seat of rest,
 And war itself remission from their toils.

Thy words are folly, scornful he replied
 The Persian monarch. Does not freedom dwell
 Among the Grecians? Therefore will they shun
 Superiour foes, for whosoe'er is free
 Will fly from danger; while the Persians know,
 If from th' allotted station they retreat,
 The scourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.
 Conceive not, Xerxes, Sparta's chief return'd,
 The Grecians want an object, where to fix

Their eyes with rev'rence, and obedient dread.
 To them, more awful than the name of king
 To Asia's trembling millions, is the law,
 Whose sacred voice enjoins them to confront
 Unnumber'd foes, to vanquish, or to die.

In silence now the banish'd king remain'd,
 While near the straits the chariot roll'd: it chanc'd,
 The Spartans then were station'd out on guard.
 These, in gymnastic exercise employ'd,
 Nor heed the monarch, nor his gaudy train;
 But toss'd the spear, and whirl'd the rapid dart,
 Or met with adverse shields in single war,
 Or trooping swiftly rush'd on ev'ry side
 With ranks unbroken, and with equal feet:
 While others calm beneath their polish'd helms
 Drew down their hair, which hung in sable curls;
 And spread their necks with terror. Xerxes here
 The exile questions. What do these intend,
 Who thus with careful hands adjust their hair?

To whom the Spartan. O imperial lord,
 Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,
 When with determin'd valour they present
 Their dauntless breasts before the jaws of death.
 Bring down thy myriads all in glitt'ring steel,
 Arm, if thou canst, the gen'ral race of man;
 All, who possess the regions unexplor'd
 Beyond the Ganges, all, whose wand'ring steps
 Beyond the Caspian range the Scythian wild,
 With those, who drink the secret fount of Nile,
 Yet to the breasts of Sparta's sons shall fear

Be still a stranger. Thus with fervour spake
 The exil'd king, when gushing from his eyes
 Resistless grief o'erflow'd his cheek. Aside
 His head he turn'd, and wept in copious streams.
 The sad remembrance of his former state,
 His dignity, his greatness, and the sight
 Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood
 And spread amazement through the world in arms,
 Excite those sorrows. Oft with eager eyes
 He views the godlike warriors, who beneath
 His standard once victorious fought, who call'd
 Him once their king and leader. Then again
 His head he bows with anguish, and bedews
 His breast with tears; in agony bemoans
 His faded honours, his illustrious name
 Forgotten now, his majesty defil'd
 With exile and dependance. So, obscur'd
 By creeping ivy, and by sordid moss,
 Some lordly palace, or stupendous fane
 Magnificent in ruin stands; where time
 Wide-wasting from the nodding roof hath mow'd
 The column down, and cleft the pond'rous dome.

Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes mourn'd
 Th'unhappy Spartan. Kindly to his own
 The exile's hand he joins, and thus humane.
 O Demaratus, this thy grief confirms,
 How well the Greeks deserve thy gen'rous praise,
 Who still repining dost their loss deplore,
 Though cherish'd here with universal love.
 But O let indignation in thy breast

Revive thy wrongs! then blest th' auspicious fate,
Which led thee far from calumny and fraud
To share the favour of the highest king.

As Demaratus with a grateful mind
Address'd himself to answer, Persia's king
Thus interrupted. Soon, as morning shines,
Do thou Tigranes and Phraortes head
The Medes and Saces. Bring those Grecians bound.
This said. The monarch to his tent return'd.

End of the Third Book.

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LEONIDAS.

BOOK IV.

LACONIA's leader with the morning rose,
When thus to Alpheus. From Arcadia's bands
Select a thousand spears. To these unite
The Thespians and Plataeans. Range their lines
Before the wall, which fortifies the pass:
There close-imbodyed will their might repulse
The num'rous foe. Obedient to his will
Th' appointed legions issuing from their tents
With deep'ning ranks Leonidas inclose.
So round their monarch in his stormy cave
The winds assemble, from his sable throne
When Æolus sends forth his dread command
To swell the main, or heav'n with clouds deform,
Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.
The chief of Sparta from the rampart's height
Thus to the fight the list'ning host inflames.

This day, O Grecians, countrymen, and friends,
Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats,
Your fathers, country, liberty, and laws
Have sent you hither, from your infant age
Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,
Laborious, active, virtuous, brave, and free,
To match your valour with ignoble foes
In war unskilful, nature's basest dross,

The foes of all utility and worth,
 And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves;
 With spirits broke by servitude and want,
 With limbs relax'd by sloth, and wanton ease,
 With minds debauch'd by vices, uninspir'd
 By all th' indearing cares in free-born hearts,
 Who cold and drooping fight without a cause,
 To whom defeat is neither grief, nor shame,
 Who seek no fruit from victory but spoil.
 These are the flow'r of Asia's host. The rest,
 Who fill their boasted numbers, are a croud
 Forc'd from their dwellings to the bloody field,
 From whom till now with jealous care their lord
 Has still withheld the instruments of war.
 These are the people, taught with patient grief
 To bear the rapine, cruelty, and spurns
 Of Xerxes' mercenary bands, and pine
 In servitude to slaves. With terrour sounds
 The trumpet's clangor in their trembling ears.
 Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance,
 Their hands sustain incumber'd, and present
 The mockery of war.—But ev'ry eye
 Flames with impatient ardour, and your breasts
 Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.
 Go then, ye sons of liberty, and sweep
 These bondmen from the field. Resistless rend
 The glitt'ring standard from their servile hands.
 Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,
 The warrior's helm profaning Think, the shades
 Of your forefathers rear their sacred brows

Here to enjoy the glory of their sons.

He spake. Loud Paeans burst from all the host.
 With fierce reply unnumber'd shouts ascend
 From hostile nations thronging down the pass.
 Such is the roar of *Ætna*, when her mouth
 Displodes combustion from her sulph'rous depths,
 And blasts the smiles of nature. Dauntless stood
 In deep array before the Phocian wall
 The Greeks close-wedg'd with implicated shields,
 And spears protended; like the graceful range
 Of arduous elms, whose interwoven boughs
 Before some rural palace wide expand
 Their venerable umbrage to retard
 The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main
 In lucid rows the rising waves reflect
 The sun's effulgence, so the Grecian helms
 Return'd his light, which o'er their convex pour'd,
 And scatter'd splendour on the dancing plumes.
 Down rush'd the foe. Exulting in the van
 Their haughty leader shakes his threatening lance,
 And frowns defiance. Bursting from his rank,
 Diomedon with instant fury fac'd
 Th' impending foes. Meantime he loudly calls
 Their chief Tigranes, whom he thus defies.

Now thou art met, Barbarian. Wouldst thou prove
 Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command
 Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.

Tigranes turning to the Persians spake.
 My friends and soldiers, check your ardent haste,
 While my strong lance yon Grecian's pride confounds.

He ceas'd. In dreadful opposition now
Each combatant advanc'd. With sinewy hand
They gripe their spears high-brandish'd. Thrice they
drove

With well-directed force the pointed steel
At either's throat, and thrice their shields repel
The destin'd wound. At length the eastern chief
With all his pow'rs collected for the stroke

His javelin rivets in the Grecian targe.
Aside Diomedon inclines, and shuns
Approaching fate. Then all his martial skill

Undaunted summons. His forsaken lance
Beside him cast, his falchion he unsheaths.
The blade, descending on Tigranes' arm,

That instant struggling to redeem his spear,
The shiv'ring hand dissevers. Pale affright
Unmans the Persian, while his active foe

Full on his neck discharg'd the rapid sword,
And open'd wide the purple gates of life.
Low sinks Tigranes in eternal shade.

The conqueror bestides the prostrate dead,
Then in the clotted ringlets of the hair
His hand intertwining, from the bleeding trunk

The head disjoin'd, and whirl'd with sudden rage
Amid the hostile numbers. All with dread
Recoil, where'er the ghastly visage flew

In sanguine circles, and pursu'd its track
Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd
A barb'rous nation, whom the chearful dawn

Of science ne'er illumin'd, view on high

A meteor waving with portentous blaze;
 Where oft, as superstition vainly dreams,
 Some daemon sits amid the baneful fires,
 Dispersing plagues and desolation round.
 Awhile the stern Diomedon remains
 Triumphant o'er the dire dismay, which froze
 The hearts of Persia; then with haughty port,
 And sullen joy among his gladsome friends
 Resumes his station. Still the Asian bands
 With consternation motionless behold
 Their foes with terrour, and suspend the fight;
 When thus Phraortes animates their breasts.

Heav'ns! can one leader's death appal this host,
 Which counts a train of monarchs for its chiefs!
 Behold Phraortes! from Imaüs' ridge
 I draw my subject files. With hardy toil
 I through the pathless forest have explor'd
 The tyger's cavern. This unconquer'd arm
 Hath from the lion rent the shaggy spoil.
 So through this field of slaughter will I chase
 Yon vaunting Greek with ruin on his head
 For great Tigranes slain His words revive
 The flame of valour through the drooping van,
 Then on the rear he brandishes his lance
 Before him shrink th' affrighted croud, and roll
 Their numbers headlong on the Grecian steel
 With loose arrangement, and uncertain feet.
 Thus with his trident ocean's angry god
 From its vast bottom turns the hideous mass
 Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach.

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Terrific stood the fierce Plataean chief
Amid the Grecian van. His ample targe,
Like a strong bulwark, prominent he rais'd
Before the line. There thunder'd all the storm
Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train
With emulating ardour charge the foe.
Where'er they turn the formidable spears,
Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon with gore,
The Persians heap the plain. Diomedon
Leads on the slaughter. From his nodding crest
The sable plumes shook terriour. Asia's bands
All shudder backward at the dreadful beams
Of that unconquerable sword, which falls
With lightning's swiftness o'er their trembling heads,
And, recking still with slain Tigranes' blood,
Their shatter'd ranks o'erturns. The furious chief,
Incompass'd round with carnage, and besmear'd
With sanguine drops, inflames his warlike friends.

O Dithyrambus! let thy deeds this day
Surmount their wonted lustre! Thou in arms,
Demophilus, worn grey, thy youth recal!
Behold these slaves without resistance bleed.
Advance, my ancient friend. Propitious fame
Smiles on thy years, and gives thy aged hand
To pluck fresh laurels for thy honour'd brow.

As, when indu'd with Promethéan heat,
The molten clay respir'd; with sudden warmth
So glows the venerable Thespian's age,
With new born vigour ev'ry sinew swells
His talchion, thund'ring on Cherasmes' helm,

The forehead clove. Ecbatana to war
 Sent forth Cheraſmes. From her potent gates
 He proud in hope her ſwarming numbers led,
 With Ariazus and Peuceſtes join'd,
 His martial brothers. They attend his doom
 By Dithyrambus foil'd. Their hoary fire
 Shall o'er his ſolitary palace roam,
 Lamenting loud his childleſs years, and curſe
 Ambition's fury, and the luſt of war,
 Then pining bow with anguiſh to the grave.
 Next by the fierce Plataean's matchleſs ſword
 Expires Damates, once the hoſt and friend
 Of fall'n Tigranes; him that day he join'd,
 And left his native bands. Of Syrian birth
 In Daphne he reſided near the grove,
 Whole hofpitable laurels in their ſhade
 Conceal'd the virgin fugitive, that ſcorn'd
 Th' embrace of Phoebus; hither ſhe repair'd
 Far from her parent ſtream, in fables feign'd
 Herſelf a laurel to have rear'd her head
 With verdant bloom in this retreat, the grove
 Of Daphne call'd, the ſeat of rural bliſs,
 Fan'd by the wing of zephyrs, and with rills
 Of bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boalt,
 And happy rival of Theſſalia's vale;
 Now hid for ever from Damates' eyes.
 Nor with unactive ſpears th' Arcadians ſtood.
 Gigantic Clonius unreſiſted preſs'd
 The yielding Perſians, who before him funk,
 Cruſh'd like vile ſtubble underneath the ſteps.

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Of some glad hind, who visits o'er the plain
His new shorn harvest. With a fearless eye
Phraortes saw the gen'ral rout. He sprung
O'er hills of carnage to confront the Greeks,
Reproaching thus his own inglorious friends.

Fly then, ye cowards, and desert your chief;
Yet single here my falchion shall oppose
The might of thousands. Raging thus, he drove
The deathful steel through Aristander's breast.
Him Dithyrambus lov'd, a sacred bard
Rever'd for justice, for his verse renown'd,
Which sung the deeds of heroes, those, who fell,
Or those, who conquer'd in their country's cause,
Th' inraptur'd soul inflaming with the thirst
Of glory won by virtue. His high strain
The Muses favour'd from their neighb'ring groves,
And blest'd with heav'nly melody his lyre.
No more from Thespia shall his feet ascend
The shady steep of Helicon. No more
The streams divine of Aganippe's fount
His tuneful lip shall moisten, nor his hands
Present their off'rings in the Muses bow'r,
The prostrate shield and unforsaken lance
Now feebly grasping, never more to swell
His lofty numbers on the sounding string.
Lo! Dithyrambus weeps. Amid the rage
Of war and conquest a swift-gushing tear
Finds one sad moment's interval to fall
On his pale friend. But soon the victor proves
His fierce revenge. Through shield and corselet plung'd,

His furious javelin tore the Persian's chest.
 Phraortes sinks, nor yet expiring, sees
 With indignation Persia's myriads fly.
 Swift through their broken legions, side by side,
 Urg'd by the voice of Victory and Fame,
 Diomedon and Dinhyrambus rang'd.
 So, where Alphéus heard the rattling car,
 And sounding hoofs along his echoing banks,
 Two gen'rous coursers, link'd in mutual reins,
 With equal speed and ardour beat the dust
 To reach the glories of th' Olympic goal.

This from his lofty chariot Xerxes saw.
 He saw his numbers pouring from the straits
 In crouded flight, then spreading o'er the field,
 All broke and scatter'd; as a river bursts
 Impetuous from its fountain, then expands
 Its limpid surface o'er the pastures broad.
 Thrice started from his seat th' astonish'd king,
 Shame, fear, and indignation rend his breast;
 As ruin irresistible were near
 To overwhelm his millions. Haste (he calls
 To Hyperanthes) haste, and meet the Greeks;
 Their daring rage and insolence repel,
 And from dishonour vindicate our name.

The godlike Hyperanthes through the tents
 Obedient moves. Deliberate and brave
 Each active prince he summons, and with care
 Collects the hardiest troops. Around him soon
 Innumerable javelins flame. His voice
 Demands attention, when he thus began.

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Now, friends, divide, and form two equal bands,
 One with the great Abrocomes, with me,
 With Intaphernes, and Hydarnes bold,
 With Mindus and Pandates shall advance,
 And snatch this short-liv'd victory from Greece.
 You Abradates with Pharnuchus join'd,
 Orontes, and Mazaeus, keep the rest
 Imbattled ready to impart their aid,
 Shou'd envious Fate exhaust our num'rous ranks;
 For, O great Mithra, may thy radiant eye
 Ne'er see us, yielding to ignoble flight,
 The Persian fame dishonour, and the praise
 Of our renown'd progenitors, who, led
 By Cyrus, gave a monarch to the world.
 Think, O ye princes, flow'r of Asia's realms,
 What endless infamy will blast your names,
 Should Greece, that narrow portion of the globe,
 Your arms defy; when Babylon hath low'r'd
 Its tow'ring head, when Lydia's pride is quell'd,
 And from Ecbatana its empire torn.
 Think too, ye warlike bands, our army's boast,
 What deeds are ask'd from your superiour swords;
 You, who our monarch's largest bounty share,
 You to whose faith and valour he commits
 Himself, his queens, his realms, and now his fame.
 While Hyperanthes marshall'd thus his host,
 Far as th' extreme limit of the pass
 Diomedon and Dithyrambus hung
 Upon the rear of Persia. Now they turn
 Victorious, striding o'er th' impurpled heaps

Of arms, and mangled dead, themselves with gore
 Distain'd; like two grim tigers, who have forc'd
 A nightly mansion, on the desert rais'd
 By some lone wandering traveller, and, dy'd
 With human slaughter, through the forest deep
 Back to their covert's dreary gloom retire.
 So pass'd these heroes o'er the crimson rock,
 Approaching now, where gasping on his shield
 Phraortes lay recumbent. Thespia's youth
 Advancing, thus his gen'rous soul express'd.

Liv'st thou, brave Persian? By propitious Jove,
 From whom the pleasing sense of mercy flows
 Through mortal bosoms, less my soul rejoic'd,
 When fortune gave the victory before,
 Than now to raise thee from this field of death.

The dying prince his languid sight unclos'd,
 And thus with trembling lips. Vain man, forbear
 To proffer me, what soon thyself must crave.
 The day is now extinguish'd in these orbs,
 Nor shall my heart beat longer than to scorn
 Thy mercy, Grecian; then resign to fate.

He ceas'd. The great, and haughty spirit fled.
 Demophilus drew nigh. The hoary chief
 Long o'er Phraortes' corse his head inclin'd,
 Pois'd on his lance, and thus address'd the slain.

Alas! how glorious were that bleeding breast,
 Had Justice giv'n the buckler to thy arm,
 And to preserve a people bade thee die!
 Who now shall mourn thee! Thy ungrateful king
 Will soon forget thy worth. Thy native land

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For thee no sumptuous monument shall raise
 Of public sorrow; thy recorded name
 No sighs among thy countrymen shall wake
 For their lost hero: what to them avail'd
 Thy might and dauntless spirit? Not to guard
 Their wives and offspring from the spoil of war,
 Not from their walls repel the hostile blaze,
 Nor desolation from their fruitful fields,
 But to extend oppression didst thou fall;
 Perhaps with inborn virtues in thy heart,
 Which, but thy angry destiny forbade,
 By freedom cherish'd might have blest'd mankind.
 All-bounteous Nature! thy impartial laws
 To no selected race of men confine
 The sense of glory, fortitude, and all
 The nobler passions, which inspire the mind,
 And render life illustrious. These thou plant'st
 In ev'ry soil. But freedom, like the sun,
 Must warm the gen'rous seeds. By her alone
 They bloom and flourish; while oppression blasts
 The tender virtues: hence a spurious growth,
 False honour, savage valour taint the soul,
 And wild ambition: hence rapacious pow'r
 The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave,
 A feast for dogs, bestrew th'insanguin'd plain.

He said. Around the venerable man
 The Grecians throng'd attentive. Conquest hush'd
 Its joyful transports. O'er the horrid field,
 Late the rude scene of tumult, all was calm.
 So, when the song of Thracian Orpheus drew

To Hebrus' margin from their dreary seats
The savage race, which Haemus wrapt in clouds,
Pángaeus cold, and Rhodopeian snows
In blood and discord nurs'd; the soothing strain
Flow'd with enchantment through their ravish'd ears:
Their fierceness melted, and amaz'd they learn'd
The sacred laws of justice, which the bard
Mix'd with the music of his heav'nly string.

Not from the field of slaughter far remote
In Oeta's rugged side had nature clove
A rocky cavern. This with moss she spread,
And o'er the entrance downward from the roots
She hung the shaggy trunks of branching firs
To heav'n's hot ray impervious. From the sides
The vivid laurel spread before the sun
Its broad and glitt'ring foliage; and, above,
The hill was darken'd with a solemn shade
Cast from the sable cypress. This retreat
Cool, as the grot of Thetis, hid beneath
The vaulted ocean, with the murm'ring sound
Of waters trickling from the riven stone
The Grecian leaders to its gloom invites.
Their helms they loosen from their glowing cheeks.
Against the rock their bucklers they repose.
Propt on their spears they stood, when Agis thus,
Sent by Leonidas, accosts the chiefs.

O ever-worthy of undying names!
Leonidas recalls you from your toil,
Which has already fill'd our mouths with praise,
Our eyes with wonder, that from yonder tow'r

On your unequal'd deeds incessant gaz'd.

To whom the bold Diomedon return'd.

Go Agis, say to Lacedaemon's king,

As yet untir'd my hand can poise the spear,

Nor hangs the buckler heavy on my arm:

And shall I then retire? And once again

Shall not the sun, before he sink, behold

The slaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance?

To him the Thespian youth. My friend and guide

To noble actions, since thy gen'rous mind

Intent on fame disdains to rest, O grant,

I too thy glorious labours may partake,

And learn once more to imitate thy deeds.

Thou, gentlest Agis, Sparta's chief intreat

Not to command us from the field of war.

Then interpos'd Demophilus. O friend;

And thou, lov'd offspring of the dearest man,

Who dost restore my brother to my eyes,

My soul your magnanimity applauds.

But, O reflect, that unabating toil

Subdues the mightiest. Valour then will sigh,

When the weak hand obeys the heart no more.

Yet I, declining with the weight of years,

Will not assign a measure to your strength;

If still you find your vigour undecay'd,

Stay and augment your glory. So, when time

Your heads shall whiten, and your feeble arms

Round the high temple's peaceful vault have hung

Their consecrated shields, your native land

Shall then with honours doubled on your age

Requite the gen'rous labours of your prime.
So spake the senior, and forsook the cave.

Now from the bubbling spring Diomedon
Receives the waters in his concave helm;
And thus address'd the genius of the flood.

Whoe'er thou art, whose deity presides
O'er this fair fountain, bounteous are thy streams;
Though ill shall I repay thee: for again
Will I this day pollute thy silver wave,
Which, mix'd with gore, shall tinge the Malian surge.

So saying from his brimming casque he quaff'd
The clear, refreshing moisture. Thus repairs
The spotted panther to Hydaspes' side,
Or eastern Indus, feasted with the blood
Of some torn deer, which nigh his cruel grasp
Had roam'd unheeding through the secret grove:
Rapacious o'er the humid brink he stoops,
And in the pure and fluid crystal cools
His reeking jaws. The Thespian warrior here.

See, valiant friend, Leonidas hath fill'd
The pass with fresh battalions. O survey
Yon line of plumed helms, and glitt'ring shields,
Which emulate the mid-day sun. What joy!
What ardent hope enlightens ev'ry face!
O let us wait no longer, lest they cry,
Our wearied limbs retard us. Let us arm,
And take our station in the glorious van.

Thus Dithyrambus. The Plataean chief
Approves the counsel, and resumes his arms.
Them as a splendid recompence he bore

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From grateful Athens, when his conqu'ring sword
 Her domes with great Miltiades redeem'd
 From Asiatic flames. Th'insculptur'd helm
 Now press'd his manly temples. From on high
 A fourfold plumage nodded, and, beneath,
 A golden dragon with effulgent scales
 The gorgeous crest illumin'd. On his arm
 His shield he brac'd. Gorgonian serpents twin'd
 Around the spacious verge. Within, the form
 Of Pallas, martial goddess, was impress'd.
 Low, as her feet, the graceful tunic flow'd.
 Betwixt two griffins on her helmet sat
 A sphynx with wings expanded, while the face
 Of dire Medusa on her bosom frown'd.
 One hand supports her javelin, which confounds
 The pride of kings; the other leads along
 A blooming virgin, Victory, whose brows
 A crown incircles; laurels she presents;
 But from her shoulders all her plumes were shorn,
 With favour'd Athens ever now to rest.
 This, Asia's terrou, on his mighty arm
 Diomedon uprear'd, then snatch'd his lance,
 And thus to Dithyrambus. Lo! my friend,
 Alone of all the Grecians, who sustain'd
 The morning's battle, still unwearied stand
 Plataea's sons, and well may keep the field,
 They, who endur'd the Marathonian toil.
 Then charge with us. Amid the foremost rank
 Thy valour shall be plac'd, and share, this day,
 Command and honours with Plataea's chief.

The hero ceas'd, and tow'rd the Grecian van
 Strides with impetuous steps. Nor slow behind
 The boast of Thespia, Dithyrambus, mov'd;
 Like blooming Hermes in celestial arms,
 When lightly graceful with his feather'd feet
 Along Scamander's flow'ry verge he pass'd,
 To aid th'incens'd divinities of Greece
 Against the Phrygian tow'rs. With eager speed
 The heroes soon th'imbattled Greeks attain'd,
 To whom the brave Diomedon began.

Not to contend, but vanquish are you come,
 And in the blood of fugitives to stain
 Your lances unoppos'd. My friends, behold,
 Where, furthest from the Malian gulf remov'd,
 The crags of Oeta less confine the straits.
 There let us bend extending wide our front.
 There with more ample scope may havoc range.

All with assent gave ear. The various bands
 Move on successive. The Plataeans first
 Against the rock are station'd. To their head
 Is Dithyrambus brought. Exulting joy
 Distends their hearts, and flashes in their eyes.
 Thanks to the great Diomedon, they cry,
 Who to our troop this godlike hero joins.
 Hail! Dithyrambus. Hail! illustrious chief.
 Well dost thou merit to have reap'd renown
 At Marathon. Amid the glorious front
 With conscious gladness blushing on his cheek
 The youth his post assumes. Around him crowd
 The hoary warriors, their unnumber'd scars

Before his sight presenting, and recount
Their various dangers. He their wounds surveys
With veneration, nor disdains to hear
The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king
Returning, Agis here the chiefs address'd.
Leonidas permits you still to brave
The hostile numbers, with Plataea's band,
If yet by toil unconquer'd. But I see,
That all unwearied ask the promis'd fight.
Hail! glorious veterans. This signal day
May your victorious swords augment the wreaths
Around your venerable brows, and make
Thermopylae, like Marathon, renown'd.

This said, he hastens back. Meantime advanc'd
The Mantinéan, Diophantus brave,
And Hegesander, Tegea's dauntless chief,
With all their troops imbattled; by their side
The Thebans form; to them their native files
Alcmaeon and Eupalamus unite;
Last on the margin of the Malian bay
Mycenae's youth Aristobulus drew;
In one impenetrable phalanx stretch'd
Across the pass. With close-connected force
An hundred warriors form'd th' expanded ranks,
And thirty bucklers ev'ry file condens'd.
In strong reserve Dienece behind
Dispos'd the Spartans, and the Locrian line.
There too with Maron Alpheus dauntless stood,
And godlike Agis. There Megistias plac'd
His blooming heir, and thus his valour fires.

O Menalippus! born of foreign race,
 Yet by these heroes not unworthy deem'd
 With them to fight for Sparta! lo! the hour
 Is come, my son, to shew thy gen'rous heart;
 That not with thee the buckler and the spear
 Are ill intrusted to maintain a cause
 So great and sacred. O remember well,
 Leonidas on yonder bulwark stands,
 Who all the war contemplates, and discerns
 The bold and fearful. O propitious heav'n!
 Grant me to hear Leonidas this day
 Applaud my son, and let Megistias die!

While thus he spake, the animated soul
 Of Menalippus struggling in his breast
 Demands the fight. This saw the tender sire,
 And thus with tears rejoin'd. Remember too!
 Thy father sees thy danger. Oh! my child!
 To me thy honour as to thee is dear;
 Yet court not death! By all thy filial love,
 By all my cares and fondness I implore!
 Amid the combat, or the warm pursuit,
 Still by the wise Dienece abide:
 His prudent valour knows th' unerring paths
 Of glory; he will guide thy youthful steps.
 This said, to Sparta's leader he retires.

Now are the enemies descried. The van
 Abrocomes and Hyperanthes led,
 With them Pandates, Intaphernes proud,
 Hydarnes, Mindus. Violent their march
 With sounding footsteps swept the stony way.

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So, where th' unequal globe in mountains swells,
 A river pours its thund'ring surge between
 The steep-erected cliffs; tumultuous roll
 The torrents bursting o'er the pointed crags:
 The mountains roar, the marble channel foams.
 With obvious arms th' intrepid Greeks withstand
 The dire encounter. Soon th' impetuous shock
 Of thousands and of myriads shakes the ground.
 Stupendous scene of terror! Under hills,
 Whose nodding summits vaulted o'er their heads,
 In unextinguishable fury join'd
 The dreadful conflict. With inverted trunks
 Obliquely bending from the shagged ridge
 The sylvan horrors overshadow the fight.
 The shrill-mouth'd trumpet, and the deep-tun'd horn,
 Mix'd with the crash of intermingling spears,
 The clanging shields, and war's discordant shouts
 Awake the echoes through the neighb'ring groves;
 And rocks and shores return the hideous sound.

End of the Fourth Book.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK V.

AMID the van of Persia was a youth
Nam'd Teribazus, not for golden stores,
Not for wide pastures travers'd o'er with herds,
With bleating thousands, or with bounding steeds;
Nor yet for pow'r, nor splendid honours fam'd.
Rich was his mind in ev'ry art divine,
And through the paths of science had he walk'd
The votary of wisdom. In the years,
When tender down invests the ruddy cheek,
He with the Magi turn'd the hallow'd page
Of Zoroastres; then his tow'ring soul
High on the plumes of contemplation soar'd,
And from the lofty Babylonian fane
With learn'd Chaldaeans trac'd the mystic sphere;
There number'd o'er the vivid fires, that gleam
Upon the dusky bosom of the night.
Nor on the sands of Ganges were unheard
The Indian sages from sequester'd bow'rs,
While, as attention wonder'd, they disclos'd
The pow'rs of nature; whether in the woods,
The fruitful glebe, or flow'r, or healing plant,
The limpid waters, or the ambient air,
Or in the purer element of fire.
The fertile plains, where great Sesostris reign'd,

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Mysterious Ægypt, next the youth survey'd
From Elephantis, where impetuous Nile
Precipitates his waters, to the sea,
Which far below receives the sev'nfold stream.
Thence o'er the Ionic coast he stray'd, nor pass'd
Miletus by, which once inraptur'd heard
The tongue of Thales, nor Priene's walls,
Where wisdom dwelt with Bias, nor the seat
Of Pittacus along the Lesbian shore.
Here too melodious numbers charm'd his ear,
Which flow'd from Orpheus, and Musæus old,
And thee, O father of immortal verse,
Mæonides, whose strains through ev'ry age
Time with his own eternal lip shall sing.
Back to his native Susa then he turn'd
His wand'ring steps. His merit soon was dear
To Hyperanthes generous and good.
And Ariana from Darius sprung
With Hyperanthes, of th' imperial race,
Which rul'd th' extent of Asia, in disdain
Of all her greatness oft an humble ear
To him would bend, and listen to his voice.
Her charms, her mind, her virtue he explor'd
Admiring. Soon was admiration chang'd
To love, nor lov'd he sooner, than despair'd.
But unreveal'd and silent was his pain;
Nor yet in solitary shades he roam'd,
Nor shun'd resort: but o'er his sorrows cast
A sickly dawn of gladness, and in smiles
Conceal'd his anguish; while the secret flame

Rag'd in his bosom, and its peace consum'd:
His heart still brooding o'er these mournful thoughts,

Can I, O wisdom, seek relief from thee,
Who dost approve my passion? From the pow'r
Of beauty only thou wouldst guard my heart.
But here thyself art charm'd, where softness, grace,
And ev'ry virtue dignify desire;

Yet thus to love despairing is to prove
The sharpest sorrow, which relentless Fate
Can from her store of woes inflict on life:
But dost not thou this moment warn my soul
To fly the fatal charmer? Do I pause?
Back to the wise Chaldaeans will I go,
Or wander on the Ganges; where to heav'n
With thee my elevated soul shall tow'r,
With thee the secrets of the earth unveil.
There no tumultuous passion shall molest
My tranquil hours, and ev'ry thought be calm.

O wretched Teribazus! all conspires
Against thy peace. Our mighty lord prepares
To overwhelm the Grecians. Ev'ry youth
Attends the war, and I, who late have pois'd
With no inglorious arm the soldier's lance,
And near the side of Hyperanthes fought,
Must join the throng. How therefore can I fly
From Ariana! who with Asia's queens
The splendid camp of Xerxes will adorn.
Then be it so. Again I will adore
Her gentle virtue. Her delightful tongue,
Her graceful sweetness shall again diffuse

Resistless magic through my ravish'd heart;
 And thus when, love, with double rage inflam'd,
 Swells to distraction in my tortur'd breast,
 Then—But in vain through darkness do I search
 My fate: despair and fortune be my guides.

The hour arriv'd, when Xerxes first advanc'd
 His arms from Susa's gates. The Persian dames
 (So were accusom'd all the eastern fair)
 In sumptuous cars accompanied his march;
 And Ariana grac'd the beauteous train.

From morn till ev'ning Teribazus guards
 Her passing wheels; his arm her weight sustains
 With trembling pleasure often, as she mounts
 Th' imperial chariot; his assiduous hand
 From each pure fountain wafts the living flood:
 Nor seldom by the fair one's soft command
 Would he repose him at her feet reclin'd,
 While o'er his lips her lovely forehead bow'd,
 Won with his grateful eloquence, that sooth'd
 With sweet variety the tedious march,
 Signaling time. He too would then forget
 His cares awhile, in raptures vain intranc'd,
 Delusion all, and fleeting rays of joy,

Soon overcast with more intense despair;
 Like wint'ry clouds, which op'ning for a time
 Tinge their black skirts with scatter'd beams of day;
 Then, swiftly closing, on the brows of Morn
 Condense their horrors, and in thickest gloom
 The ruddy beauty veil. Such woes oppress'd
 The Persian's heart, not soften'd; for this day

His daring valour from the bleeding van
 Oppos'd the frown of adamantine Mars.
 With no tiara were his temples bound,
 The slender lance of Asia he disdain'd,
 And her light target. Eminent he mov'd
 In Grecian arms the wonder of his foes.
 Among th' Ionians had his strenuous limbs
 In war been practis'd. A resplendent casque
 Flam'd on his head. Before his face and chest
 Down to the knees his ample shield was spread.
 A pond'rous ash with skilful hands he grasp'd.
 Thus arm'd, tremendous in the front he stood.
 Beneath his might two bold Phliansians died,
 And three Tegéans, whose indignant chief,
 Brave Hegesander, vengeance breath'd in vain,
 With streaming wounds repuls'd. Thus far unmatched
 His strength prevail'd, when Hyperanthes' voice
 Recall'd his fainting legions. Now each band
 Their languid courage reinforc'd with rest.
 Mean time with Teribazus thus confer'd
 The godlike prince. Thou much-deserving youth!
 O had thy deeds with emulation warm'd
 The frozen hearts of Persia, Greece had wept
 Her prostrate ranks, not triumph'd in our shame.
 Relaxing now the wearied fight, I wait,
 Till from the camp with Abradates strong
 The brave Pharnuchus and Mazaeus move,
 And with fresh pow'rs renew the drooping war.
 For since surpass'd in valour, we must waste
 By endless numbers, and continual toil

The matchless ardour of our gallant foes.

He said. Immers'd in sadness, scarce replied,
But to himself thus plain'd the am'rous youth.

Still do I languish, mourning o'er the fame,
My arm acquires. O wretched heart! thou seat
Of constant sorrow, what deceitful smiles
Yet canst thou borrow from illusive hope
To flatter life. At Ariana's feet
What if with supplicating knees I bow'd,
Implor'd her pity, and reveal'd my love?
Wretch, can'st thou climb to yon effulgent orb,
And share the splendours which irradiate heav'n?

Dost thou aspire to that exalted maid,
Great Xerxes' sister, rivalling the hopes
Of Asia's purpled potentates and kings?
Unless within her bosom I inspir'd
A passion fervent as my own, nay more,
Such as might dissipate each virgin fear,
And unrestrain'd disclose its fond desire,
My hopes are fruitless. Plung'd in black despair,
He thus revolv'd, when suddenly the cries
Of Aribaeus smote his pensive ear.

By mutual danger, and by friendship join'd,
They had been long companions in the toils
Of war. Together with victorious steps
The sons of Nile they chac'd, when Ægypt's pride
Before the arms of Hyperanthes fell.
Stretch'd on the plain, and cover'd o'er with wounds,
By all abandon'd, Teribazus views
His gallant friend, His languid soul awakes,

And forth he issues from the Persian line.
The bleeding warrior in his strong embrace
Swift he conveys. By indignation fir'd,
Fierce from the Grecians Diophantus rush'd
With loud defiance. Teribazus leaves
His rescu'd friend. His massy targe he rears,
Advances high his formidable spear,
And turns intrepid on th'approaching foe.
Amazement follow'd. On he strode, and shook
The plumed honours of his shining crest.
Th'ill-fated Greek awaits th' unequal fight;
Pierc'd in the throat, with sounding arms he falls;
Through ev'ry band the Mantinéans mourn.
Upon the slain the victor fix'd his sight,
And thus reflected. By thy splendid arms
Thou art a Greek of no ignoble rank,
And from thy fall perhaps am I adorn'd
With more conspicuous lustre. What if heav'n
Should add new victims, like thyself, to grace
My undeserving hand, who knows, but she
Might smile upon my trophies. Oh! vain thought!
Disperse, ye phantom hopes! Too long, my heart,
Hast thou in vain contended with thy woes!
I stand this moment on the verge of life,
By fame invited, by despair impell'd
To pass th' irremeable bound. No more
Shall Teribazus backward turn his steps,
But here decide his fate. Then beat no more,
Thou troubled heart, and ev'ry grief be still
Now at th' approach of everlasting peace.

He ended, when a mighty foe drew nigh ;
Not less than Dithyrambus. E'er they join'd,
The Persian thus the Thespian youth address'd.

Say, art not thou th' unconquerable Greek,
Whose dauntless valour mow'd our battle down,
And scatter'd nations? To attempt thy force
This day I purpos'd, when our chiefs from fight
Their host withdrew? That now my single arm
Thou deign'st to meet, receive my thanks; and know,
The thought of conquest less employs my mind,
Than that by thee I cannot fall with shame.

He ceas'd. These words the Thespian chief return'd.
Of all the praises from thy gen'rous mouth
The only share, which justice bids me claim,
Is, that I here adventure to confront
Thy matchless strength. Believe not, that unmark'd
Were thy great deeds. From yon unbounded camp
None yet hath equall'd thy victorious hand.
Whence thy armour of the Grecian form?
Whence thy tall spear? thy helmet? whence the weight
Of that strong shield unlike thy eastern friends?
If thou be'st some fugitive, who, lost
To liberty and virtue, art become
Tyrant's vile stipendiary; with grief
That valour, thus triumphant, I behold,
Which after all its danger, and brave toil
Deserves no honour from the gods, or men.
Here Teribazus with a sigh return'd
To Greece a stranger, and a wretch
Whom thee unknown, who seek this hour, to die;

Though not ignobly, but in death to raise
My name from darkness, while I end my woes.

The Grecian then. I view thee, and I mourn.
A dignity, which virtue only bears,
And resolution, on thy brow enthron'd
(Though grief hath dim'd thy drooping eye) demand
My veneration; and whatever be
The malice of thy fortune, what the cares,
Which thus infest thy quiet, they create
Within my breast the pity of a friend:
Why hast thou then compell'd me to oppose
My arm against thee, while thy might supports
Th' unjust ambition of malignant kings,
The foes to virtue, liberty, and peace?
Yet free from rage, or enmity I list
My adverse javelin. Victory I ask,
Thy life may fate for happier hours reserve.

This said, their beaming lances they pretend,
Of hostile hate, or fury both devoid;
As on the Isthmian, or Olympic sand
For fame alone contending. Either host,
Pois'd on their spears, in silent wonder gaz'd.
The fight begins, when soon the Grecian lance,
Which, all the day in constant battle worn,
Unnumber'd shields and corselets had transfix'd,
Against the Persian target, shiv'ring, breaks,
Its master's hand disarming. Then began
The sense of honour, and the dread of shame
To swell in Dithyrambus Undismay'd
He grapples with the foe, and instant seiz'd

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The threat'ning jav'lin, e'er th' uplifted arm
 Could execute the meditated wound.
 The weapon burst betwixt their struggling hands.
 They loose their grasp, and bare their shining swords.
 With equal swiftness to defend, or charge,
 Each active youth advances, or recedes.
 On ev'ry side they traverse, now direct,
 Obliquely now the wheeling blades descend.
 Still is the conflict dubious, when the Greek
 Dissembling points his falchion to the earth,
 His arm depress'd, as overcome with toil ;
 While with his buckler cautious he repels
 The blows repeated from th' exulting foe.
 Greece trembles for her hero. Joy pervades
 The Asian ranks, and Hyperanthes strides
 Before the line, preparing to receive
 His friend triumphant. Teribazus now
 Press'd with redoubled efforts. Still the Greek
 Sustains th' assault, defensive, and at last,
 As with unguarded fury of his strokes
 Th' unwary Persian sideways swung his targe,
 The fatal moment Dithyrambus watch'd,
 And, darting forward with his feet outstretch'd,
 His falchion buries in th' obnoxious side.
 Affection, grief, and terrour wing the speed
 Of Hyperanthes. From his bleeding foe
 The Greek retires, not distant, and awaits
 The eastern prince. But he with wat'ry cheeks,
 And dumb with sorrow clasps his dying friend,
 From whose cold lip with interrupted phrase

These accents broke. O dearest, best of men!
 My heart is fruitful with ten thousand thoughts
 Of gratitude and love to thee; but fate
 Denies my voice the utterance. O my friend!
 O Hyperanthes! hear my tongue unfold,
 What thou shouldst ne'er have known before this hour;
 When, as I open all my secret soul,
 I may at once retire, and veil my eyes
 In endless night: nor thou presumption deem,
 What with my dying breath I here divulge.
 I love thy sister. With despair I lov'd,
 And thence perhaps untimely is my date;
 Though, witness heav'n, without regret I bleed
 With honour thus in Persia's fight and thine.

He ceas'd: th' inexorable hand of Fate
 Weigh'd down his eyelids, and the gloom of death
 His fleeting sight eternally o'er shades.
 Him on Choaspes o'er the blooming verge
 His frantic mother shall bewail, and strew
 Her silver tresses in the crystal tide;
 While all the shore re-echoes to the name
 Of Teribazus lost. Th' afflicted prince,
 The pallid corse contemplating with tears,
 Thus in the bitterness of grief exclaims.

Oh! Teribazus. Oh! my friend, whose loss
 I will deplore for ever. Oh! what pow'r,
 To me and thee averse, thus clos'd thy breast
 To Hyperanthes, with distrust unkind.
 She should, she must have lov'd thee. Now no more
 Thy friendly aspect shall delight my eyes,

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While in remembrance thy unequal'd worth
Will live for ever to remind my grief
Of what I lost. O Susa, if again
Thee I revisit from this hostile land,
Far from the clamours of tumultuous war,
Then shall my hours be vacant to complaint,
Whole years shalt thou be witness, while I mourn,
And Ariana shall assist my woes.
Let fiercest vengeance now possess my soul.

He said, and ardent rushes on the Greek,
Who, while his noble enemy expir'd,
And Hyperanthes snatch'd with tender arms
The last embraces from his gasping friend,
Stood near, reclin'd in sadness o'er his shield,
And in the pride of victory repin'd,
Nor mark'd his threatening foe: when swift approach'd
Diomedon. Before the Thespian youth
Aloft he rais'd his targe, and loudly thus.

Hold thee, Barbarian, from a life more worth,
Than thee, and Xerxes with his host of slaves.

His words he seconds with his rapid lance.
Soon a tremendous conflict had ensu'd,
But Intaphernes, Mindus, and the half
Of Persia's leaders anxious for the life
Of Hyperanthes pour'd with all their bands
Betwixt th' encount'ring chiefs. With mutual wrath
They strove in vain the combat to renew.
So rage two bulls upon th' opposing banks
Of some deep flood which parts the fruitful mead;
Defiance thunders from their angry mouths

In vain; in vain the furrow'd earth they rend :
 Wide rolls the stream, and intercepts the war.
 The fierce Plataean satiates his revenge
 On vulgar lives. Before his dreaded arm
 Whole ranks are scatter'd. But the Persian prince,
 Borne down the strefs of battle, gains the shore,
 Where then the brave Abrocomes advanc'd;
 With him Orontes and Pharnuchus stood,
 Mazaeus, Abradates fam'd in arms,
 And all the boldest of the eastern chiefs
 Begirt with fresh battalions : here with speed
 Abrocomes his brother thus bespake.

To Intaphernes is Pandates sent
 With charge to harrafs in perpetual fight
 The Grecians next the mountains. Thou with me
 And these unite thy valour. Here the flow'r
 Of all our army is together drawn,
 Here all the weight of battle will impend.
 He said. The godlike Hyperanthes seeks
 The dang'rous van. He heads the splendid throng
 Of satraps, princes, and imperial pow'rs;
 Themselves the lords of nations, who before
 The throne of Xerxes tributary bow'd.
 Now mix'd the war. Th' inverted javelins gleam
 From ev'ry part, and fell Bellona roars.

Who first distain'd with Persian blood his sword?
 Eupalamus. Artembares he slew,
 And Derdas fierce, whom Caucasus had rear'd
 On its tempestuous brow, the savage sons
 Of violence and rapine; but their doom

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Great Hyperanthes marks: his angry lance
 Arrests the victor in his haughty course.
 Beneath the strong Abrocomes o'erwhelm'd,
 Melissus swells the number of the dead.
 None could Mycenae boast of prouder birth
 Than young Melissus; blooming, as the son
 Of Maia, all in radiant arms he grac'd
 The front of battle; he in Cirrha's vale,
 Where high Parnassus with its double top
 O'er shades the Pythian games, the envied prize
 Of fame obtain'd: low sinks his laurell'd head
 In death's cold night, and horrid gore deforms
 His graceful locks, impatient for revenge
 Aristobulus strides before the van.
 A storm of fury darkens all his brow.
 Around he rolls his gloomy eye, and marks
 Achaemenes for death, of regal blood
 Deriv'd from Croesus, once th' imperial lord
 Of nations; him the nymphs of Halys wept,
 When, with delusive oracles beguil'd
 By Delphi's god, he pass'd their fatal waves
 A mighty empire to dissolve: nor knew
 Th' ill-destin'd king, that envious fortune watch'd
 That dreadful moment from his hand to wrest
 The scepter of his fathers. In the shade
 Of humble life his race on Tmolus' brow
 Lay hid, 'till, rous'd to battle, here his breath
 Achaemenes resigns. Then Lycis bled,
 For horrid war ill chosen. He was skill'd
 To tune the lulling flute, and melt the heart;

Or with his pipe's awak'ning strains invite
 The lovely dames of Lydia to the dance:
 They graceful o'er the verdant level mov'd
 In varied measures, while the cooling breeze
 Beneath their swelling garments wanton'd o'er
 Their snowy breasts, and smooth Cayster's wave
 Soft gliding murmur'd by. His op'ning chest
 Pours forth his entrails, and supine he falls.
 Not long the Grecian triumphs, From the slain
 In all the pride of conquest as he rends
 His reeking javelin, Hyperanthes' steel
 His knee invades, and bursts the finewy cords.
 The Mycenaeans with uplifted shields,
 Corinthians, and Phliansians gather round
 The wounded Grecian. With redoubled rage
 The conflict glows. Abrocomes incites
 Each Persian leader; all obey his voice;
 Here Abradates, there Mazaeus pres'd,
 Orontes, and Hydarnes; none retire
 From toil, or peril: urg'd on ev'ry side,
 The Greeks at length th' abandon'd chief resign.
 Despairing, raging, destitute he stands,
 Propt on his spear; his wound forbids retreat.
 None, but his brother Eumenes, abide
 The dire extremity. His shield defends
 The fainting chief, till Hyperanthes' sword
 Full on his arm its dreadful weight discharg'd.
 Down with the buckler drops the sever'd hand,
 Nor quits its grasp. Now sink the wretched pair
 Beneath the Persian's unresisted steel:

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From both their breasts the vital-currents flow,
And mix their streams. Elate the Persians roll
Their deepning legions on the foes dismay'd.
The Greeks their station painfully maintain.
This soon the faithless Anaxander saw,
When thus to Leontiades he spake.

This is the time to aid our Persian friends.
Behold, the Greeks are press'd. Let Thebes retire,
And yield a bloodless conquest to the king.

The Thebans strait desert the broken line
Not with unpunish'd treachery; the spears
Of fierce Orontes, and Pharnuchus join'd
With Mindus gor'd their shameful flight, and thin'd
Their bleeding files. Meantime, as he, who rul'd
Than Jove more ancient on the throne of heav'n,
When from the womb of Chaos dark the world
Emerg'd to birth, where'er he view'd the jar
Of atoms yet discordant and unform'd,
Confusion thence with pow'rful voice dispell'd,
Till light and order universal reign'd;
So from the wall Leonidas explor'd
The various war. He saw the Theban rout,
That Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenae look'd
Affrighted backward; instantly he charg'd
The sons of Lacedaemon to repair
The disunited phalanx. Ere they move,
Dieneces inspires them. Fame, my friends,
Calls forth your valour in a signal hour;
For you this glorious period she reserv'd
To vindicate the Spartan name. He spake.

On either side supported by the might
 Of Agis and of Alpheus, he conducts
 His gen'rous troop, who, rivetting their shields,
 In dense array indissolubly firm
 Confront the Persians, and with death repulse
 Their scatter'd numbers; when with efforts vain
 They oft renew'd the contest, and recoil'd
 As oft confounded with diminish'd ranks,
 Thus Hyperanthes counsell'd. Learn, O chiefs,
 From whence alone success can grace our arms.
 These are a band selected from the Greeks,
 Unlike the others, whom we lately chas'd;
 Perhaps the Spartans, whom we oft have heard
 By Demaratus prais'd. To break their line
 False is the hope, while unarray'd, and lax,
 And wanting union singly we assail
 Their strength collected. Do not we preside
 O'er Asia's myriads, and our valour boast,
 And martial arts above the vulgar herd?
 Let us, ye chiefs, attempt in order'd ranks
 To join our force, and emulate the foe.

They wait not dubious. Soon a dreadful line
 From Oeta's mountain to the shore extends,
 Compos'd of all the leaders, Mindus bold,
 Pharnuchus, and Mazaeus, and the strength
 Of fierce Abrocomes, with each, who bore
 The highest honours, and excell'd in war.
 To these succeed a chosen number drawn
 From those, whom Asia boasts her bravest sons,
 Who from their king perpetual stipends share;

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And, station'd round his provinces, by arms
His tyranny sustain. In ev'ry part
Is Hyperanthes seen with active care
To form the huge battalion. Soon they stand
In just array, when cautious, lest their march
Might still relax their order, Persia's prince
Amid the center of the foremost rank
Orontes plac'd, committing to his hand
Th' imperial standard; whose expanded folds
Glow'd in the air, presenting to the sun
The richest dye of Tyre: the royal bird
Amid the gorgeous tincture shone exprest
In flaming gold. On this the eastern chief
Commands each Persian station'd in the front
To turn his eyes regardful, and to guide
His slow and equal feet by this alone.
Retiring, or advancing. Next he charg'd,
That ev'ry warrior through the num'rous files;
Observing none but those before him rang'd,
Should watch their motions, and their steps pursue.
Close by the standard then th' intrepid chief
His post assumes, and animates the band.

Illustrious warriors, whose unconquer'd arms
Rebellious Ægypt, and the Libyan felt,
Think what the splendour of your former deeds
From you demands; remember, from the great
Heroic actions are a debt to fame.
No middle course remains for them to tread
Whom she hath once ennobled; and this hour
Or with fresh trophies will enlarge your praise,

Or will for ever with dishonour blast.

The hero said, and all to fight proceed.

As, when tempestuous Eurus stems the weight
Of western Neptune struggling through the straits,
Which bound Alcides' labours, here the storm
With rapid wing reverberates the tide,
There the contending surge with furrow'd tops
To mountains swell, and whelming o'er the beach
On either coast invests with hoary foam
The Mauritanian and Iberian strand :
Not with less rage in hideous onset meet
The Grecians and Barbarians. These preserve
Their foremost ranks unbroken, where was drawn
The prime of Asia's warriors ; and the croud,
Though still promiscuous pouring from behind,
Yet added pressure to th' imbattled chiefs
With endless numbers. Like the mural strength
Of some proud city bulwark'd round, and arm'd
With rising tow'rs to guard her wealthy stores ;
Immoveable, impenetrable stood
The serried phalanx of the Greeks. Behind,
Their country spread, their fields with plenty crown'd,
Their native walls and habitations lay
With each dear pledge of friendship and of love.
High in the Persian van th' exalted lance
Of Hyperanthes flam'd. Beside him press'd
Abrocomes, Hydarnes, and the bulk
Of Abradates terrible in war.
And here the great Dienece upheld
His shield's expanded surface, and alone

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Firm, as a Memphian pyramid, sustain'd
The stress of thousands. Alpheus here unmov'd,
And Agis there connect their spacious orbs,
With Menalippus wife Megistias' heir
In one impervious line. Long time the hosts
Maintain in strong and unrelax'd array
The conflict undecided; nor could Greece
Repel the adverse numbers, nor the force
Of Asia's myriads could remove the Greeks.

But now from Sparta's king, who soon discern'd
The Persian's new arrangement, Medon hastes,
Th' illustrious chief of Locris, from the race
Of Ajax sprung in Trojan fields renown'd:
To wife Dienece he thus began.

Leonidas commands the Grecian line
To yield before the Persians, and with speed
To measure back some paces. Soon, he deems,
The unexperienc'd foe in wild pursuit
Will break their order. Then the charge renew;
Let Agis, join'd with Alpheus, from the line
Rush with Laconia's troop imbattled-deep,
And force a passage through the Barb'rous host;
Thou with a strong battalion from the sons
Of Locris drawn must follow swift, and reach
The Spartans led by Agis; with the rest
Of Locris' youth shall I advance to fill
Your vacant station, and the line maintain;
While in the narrow entrance, where the pass
Looks o'er the Malian plain on Persia's camp,
Do thou arrange to intercept the foe,

Should Asia pour fresh succours from her tents:
 Then Xerxes soon the slaughter shall deplore
 Of all these thousands in the straits inclos'd
 For sure destruction; and the gods of Greece
 Behold their temples with profusion grac'd
 Of splendid off'rings from Barbarian spoils
 Won by their free-born supplicants this day.

This heard, Dienece's obedient gave
 Through ev'ry band the signal of retreat,
 When all at once drew backward. Persia stop'd,
 As with amazement rooted to the earth
 At unexpected conquest; till the voice
 Of fierce Abrocomes their minds awakes
 With these triumphant accents. By the sun
 They fly before us. My victorious friends,
 Delay you then to enter Greece? Away,
 Rush on undaunted: I already hear
 Our horse and chariots thund'ring o'er their plains,
 And view their towns involv'd in Persian fires.

He said. With hurried violence they roll
 Tumultuous forward. All with headlong pace
 Wide from their ranks expatiate in pursuit,
 Disjoin their order, and the line dissolve.
 This when the sage Dienece's descends,
 The Grecians halt, returning to the charge
 With sudden onset. In a moment, pierc'd
 By Lacedaemon's chief, Orontes falls,
 And quits th' imperial banner; this the Greek
 In triumph waves, and gives the dreadful sign.
 At once with Agis tow'ring in the front,

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And rapid Alpheus all Laconia's band,
In deep arrangement bursting from the line,
Bear down with irresistible career
The eastern legions, shatter'd and o'erturn'd
With all their standards trampled on the plain.
As the swift vessel, when a rising gale
Distends the canvass, its resistless course
Impells through millions of opposing waves;
Through the Barbarian multitudes so pierc'd
The Spartan wedge. Invincible o'er hills
Of arms, and mangled corsees they impress
Their crimson footsteps. Persia's bravest chiefs,
Ev'n Hyperanthes from the line is driv'n;
And flying thousands through the pass are swept
Before the Spartans. With a Locrian troop
Of hideous depth Dienece pursues
His conqu'ring friends, and hews his purple way
Through Asia's numbers, which again were clos'd
In vain: himself unconquerable leads
Destruction on, and heaps the rock with death.
But on the broken foe what ruin falls
From Alpheus' sword? O'er all in swift pursuit
Was he renown'd. His rapid feet had match'd
The son of Peleus in the dusty course,
Or had he run for Atalanta's love,
He had rejected Cytheraea's aid;
Nor of her swiftness to beguile the fair
Before her steps had thrown the golden balls.
But now the wrongs, the long-remember'd wrongs
Of Polydorus animate his strength

With tenfold vigour, guided by revenge,
 His falchion reddens with Barbarian blood;
 The gory drops besprinkle all his shield,
 Like crimson poppies o'er the yellow plain.
 As, when with horror wing'd a whirlwind rends
 A shatter'd navy, from the ocean cast,
 Th' enormous fragments hide the sandy beach:
 Thus o'er the rock the Persians lay bettrewn
 By Alpheus raging in the swift pursuit.
 Not with severer pangs the god of day
 The Theban queen afflicted, when, incens'd
 With her proud vaunts, he hurl'd her blooming race
 From youth and beauty to the pale abodes;
 Than now distracted Hyperanthes' soul,
 As round him, bleeding by the Spartan's lance,
 His noblest friends lay gasping. Oft he strove
 To turn his flying legions, oft the fight
 With Abradates and his brother's force
 Renews, against insuperable foes
 In vain repugnant; till, by all around
 Deserted, mixing with the gen'ral rout,
 He yields to fortune, and the field forsakes.
 So with relapsing waves the ebbing tide
 Beats for a time against the shelving strand,
 Still by degrees retiring, and at last
 Within the bosom of the main subsides.

Now at Thermopylae's extremest bound
 The Spartans check'd their progress. Soon approach'd
 Dieneces, and thus began. Behold,
What numbers have we pass'd of Persia's sons,

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Be swift, my friends, and form. He said, and fill'd
The narrow straits with order'd files, a depth
Of fifty warriors; half on Asia's host,
Half tow'rd the pass were turn'd, a double front,
Where ev'ry rank with twenty javelins flam'd.
The Locrian band to Agis is assign'd,
Who stands prepar'd to stop the flying foes;
Dionæes himself to Persia's camp
Presents the terrors of the Spartan steel.

Now, Muse, the wond'rous stratagem display,
Which Sparta's hero, whose presiding care
Mark'd all the great vicissitudes of fight,
And rul'd the course of slaughter, had conceiv'd
To whelm the num'rous, long-resisting foe
In hideous death, and signalize the day
With horrors new to war. As o'er the wall,
His constant station, darting through the straits
His watchful eye, ere yet the battle clos'd,
He view'd the hostile myriads swarming down,
And nations still succeeding from the camp
Immense, exhaustless, by an horrid length
Of clust'ring helms, and shields, and threatening spears
Join'd to the Grecian van; the wary chief,
Left by the long protracted fight his Greeks
Might yield o'erlabour'd, from the Locrians chose
A thousand warriors. These, by Maron led,
Ascend the mountain, which o'erhung the pass.
His charge he soon reveals. A thousand hands
At once with restless pains assemble stones
Of hugest bulk, and wither'd trunks upturn

In elder times by whirlwinds from the grove.
 Unwearied then they loosen from the rocks
 Broad, craggy fragments; from the mountain hew
 Its venerable firs, and aged oaks
 Of wide circumference, and knotted strength,
 Which of their branches by the lightning bared,
 Presented still against its-blasting flame
 Their hoary pride unshaken. These the Greeks
 Roll heavy on, with massy leavers heave,
 Or drag with strong-knit cables, till they reach;
 Where o'er the Persian multitudes inclin'd
 The mountain's edge; so lofty, that the voice
 Of war below there lost its deafning roar,
 And soften'd into murmurs. Still his post,
 Though Hyperanthes from the field was driv'n,
 With thronging numbers Intaphernes bold
 Beneath the shade of this incumbent hill
 Against the fierce Diomedon maintain'd;
 Great Intaphernes, progeny of kings,
 Whom o'er Damascus, and the Syrian palms
 Had Xerxes seated with despotic sway
 His substitute. This Maron from on high
 Surveys, and gives the signal; downward sinks
 The nodding pile, stupendous heap of death!
 Trees roll'd on trees with mingled rock descend,
 Unintermitted ruin. Loud resound
 The hollow trunks against the mountain's side,
 Swift bounds each craggy mass. The foes beneath
 Look up aghast, with horror shrink, and die;
 Whole legions, crush'd beneath the dreadful heaps,

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Lie hid and lost, as never they had known
 A name, or being; while around them grew
 An hill of ruin. Numbers still survive,
 Who shun destruction with impetuous flight;
 But Agis stops them: Intaphernes falls
 Before his thund'ring arm. Again they turn
 To meet resolute ruin. From behind
 With twice two hundred Locrians Agis pours.

Meantime the Grecian line (so Sparta's king
 Decreed) had left its station, and beyond
 The heaps of dreadful carnage was advanc'd;
 There, stretch'd from Oeta to the Malian bay,
 The Locrians led by Medon had dispos'd,
 With Corinth, Phlius and Mycenae's train
 Their hostile phalanx o'er the less'ning pass.
 Along the mountain's side Plataea's troop,
 The Mantinéans, and Tegaeans stood,
 An horrid length of war. Th' unwearied swords
 Of Dithyrambus and Diomedon
 Still blaz'd the terrour of the barb'rous host.
 Before them fled the Persians to the shore,
 All in a moment by the various bands
 Of Greece surrounded. From the gulph profound
 Perdition here inevitable frowns,
 And there, incircled by a grove of spears,
 They stand devoted hecatombs to Mars.
 Now not a moment's interval delays
 Their gen'ral doom, but down the Malian steep
 Prone are they hurried to th' expanded arms
 Of Horror rising from the op'ning deep.

And grasping all their numbers, as they fall.
 The dire confusion, like a storm, invades
 The chafing billows; loud resounds the shore:
 And o'er whole troops, by fell Bellona roll'd
 In one vast ruin from the craggy ridge,
 O'er all their arms and ensigns, deep ingulph'd,
 With hideous roar the surge for ever clos'd.

End of the Fifth Book.

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LEONIDAS.

BOOK VI.

IN sable pomp with all her starry train
The night assum'd her throne. Recall'd from war,
Her long-protracted labours Greece forgets,
Dissolv'd in silent slumber; all but those,
Who watch'd th'uncertain perils of the dark,
An hundred warriors: Agis was their chief.
High on the wall intent the hero sat,
As o'er the surface of the tranquil main
Along its undulating breast the wind
The various din of Asia's host convey'd
In one deep murmur swelling in his ear:
When, by the sound of footsteps down the pass
Alarm'd, he calls aloud. What feet are those,
Which beat the the echoing pavement of the rock?
With speed reply, nor tempt your instant fate.

He said, and thus return'd a voice unknown.
Not with the feet of enemies we come,
But crave admittance with a friendly tongue.

The Spartan answers. Through the midnight shade
What purpose draws your wand'ring steps abroad?
To whom the stranger. We are friends to Greece,
And to the presence of the Spartan king
Admission we implore. The cautious chief
Of Lacedaemon hesitates again;

When thus with accents musically sweet
A tender voice his wondring ear allur'd.

O gen'rous Grecian, listen to the pray'r
Of one distress'd! whom grief alone hath led
In this dark hour to these victorious tents,
A wretched woman, innocent of fraud.

The Greek descending through th' unfolded gates
Upheld a flaming brand. One first appear'd
In servile garb attir'd; but near his side
A woman graceful and majestic stood;
Not with an aspect rivalling the pow'r
Of fatal Helen, or the wanton charms
Of love's soft queen; but such, as far excell'd,
Whate'er the lilly, blending with the rose,
Paints on the cheek of beauty soon to fade;
Such, as express'd a mind, which wisdom rul'd,
And sweetness temper'd, virtue's purest light
Illumining the countenance divine,
Yet could not sooth remorseless fate, nor teach
Malignant fortune to revere the good,
Which oft with anguish rends the spotless heart,
And oft associates wisdom with despair.
In courteous phrase began the chief humane.

Exalted fair, who thus adorn'd the night,
Forbear to blame the vigilance of war,
And to the laws of rigid Mars impute,
That I thus long unwilling have delay'd
Before the great Leonidas to place
This your apparent dignity and worth.

He spake, and gently to the lofty tent

f Sparta's king the lovely stranger guides.
 t Agis' summons with a mantle broad
 is mighty limbs Leonidas infolds,
 nd quits his couch. In wonder he surveys
 th' illustrious virgin, whom his presence aw'd :
 er eye submissive to the ground inclin'd
 With veneration of the godlike man.
 nt soon his voice her anxious dread dispell'd,
 benevolent and hospitable thus.

Thy form alone, thus amiable and great,
 hy mind delineates, and from all commands
 preme regard. Relate, thou noble dame,
 y what relentless destiny compell'd,
 hy tender feet the paths of darkness tread.
 hearse th' afflictions, whence thy virtue mourns.

On her wan cheek a sudden blush arose,
 ke day's first dawn upon the twilight pale,
 d, wrapt in grief, these words a passage broke.

If to be most unhappy, and to know,
 hat hope is irrecoverably fled ;
 to be great and wretched may deserve
 mmiseration from the good ; behold,
 hou glorious leader of unconquer'd bands,
 hold descended from Darius' loins
 ' afflicted Ariana, and my pray'r
 cept with pity, nor my tears disdain !
 st, that I lov'd the best of human race,
 nature's hand with ev'ry virtue form'd,
 roic, wise, adorn'd with ev'ry art ;
 shame unconscious does my heart reveal.

This day, in Grecian arms conspicuous clad,
 He fought, he fell. A passion long conceal'd
 For me alas! within my brother's arms
 His dying breath resigning, he disclos'd.
 —Oh I will stay my sorrows! will forbid
 My eyes to stream before thee, and my heart,
 Thus full of anguish, will from sighs restrain!
 For why should thy humanity be griev'd
 With my distress, and learn from me to mourn
 The lot of nature doom'd to care and pain!
 Hear then, O king, and grant my sole request,
 To seek his body in the heaps of slain.

Thus to the Spartan su'd the regal maid,
 Resembling Ceres in majestic woe,
 When, suppliant at Jove's resplendent throne,
 From dreary Pluto, and th' infernal gloom
 Her lov'd and lost Proserpina she sought:
 Fix'd on the weeping queen with stedfast eyes,
 Laconia's chief these tender thoughts recall'd.
 Such are thy sorrows, O for ever dear!
 Who now at Lacedaemon dost deplore
 My everlasting absence! then inclin'd
 His head, and sigh'd; nor yet forgot to charge
 His friend, the gentle Agis, through the straits
 The Persian Princess to attend and aid.
 With careful steps they seek her lover's corse.
 The Greeks remember'd, where by fate repress'd
 His arm first ceas'd to mow their legions down,
 And from beneath a mass of Persian slain
 Soon drew the hero by his armour known.

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To Agis' high pavilion they resort.
 Now, Ariana, what transcending pangs
 Thy soul involv'd? What horror clasp'd thy heart!
 But love grew mightiest, and her beauteous limbs
 On the cold breast of Teribazus threw
 The grief-distasted maid. The clotted gore
 Deform'd her snowy bosom. O'er his wounds
 Loose flow'd her hair, and, bubbling from her eyes,
 Impetuous sorrow lav'd the purple clay;
 When forth in groans her lamentations broke.

O torn for ever from my weeping eyes!
 Thou, who despairing to obtain her heart,
 Who then most lov'd thee, didst untimely yield
 Thy life to fate's inevitable dart
 For her, who now in agony unfolds
 Her tender bosom, and repeats her vows
 To thy deaf ear, who fondly to her own
 Now clasps thy breast insensible and cold.
 Alas! do those unmoving, ghastly orbs
 Perceive my gushing anguish! Does that heart,
 Which death's inanimating hand hath chill'd,
 Share in my suff'rings, and return my sighs!
 — Oh! bitter unsurmountable distress!
 Lo! on thy breast is Ariana bow'd,
 Hangs o'er thy face, unites her cheek to thine
 Not now to listen with enchanted ears
 To thy persuasive eloquence, no more
 Charm'd with the wisdom of thy copious mind!
 She could no more. Invincible despair
 Suppress'd her utterance. As a marble form

Fix'd on the solemn sepulchre, unmov'd
 O'er some dread hero, whom his country lov'd,
 Bends down the head with imitated woe :
 So paus'd the princess o'er the breathless clay,
 Intranc'd in sorrow. On the dreary wound,
 Where Dithyrambus' sword was deepest plung'd,
 Mute for a space, and motionless she gaz'd.
 Then with a look unchang'd, nor trembling hand
 Drew forth a poniard, which her garment veil'd,
 And sheathing in her heart th' abhorred steel
 On her slain lover, silent sinks in death.
 In vain the Spartan interven'd. With tears
 He view'd the prostrate lovers, and exclaim'd.
 Oh! most unhappy, heavy on your heads
 Hath sorrow fall'n, which o'er your pale remains
 Commands this pity from a stranger's eye!
 Illustrious ruins, may the grave impart
 That peace, which life denied! And now receive
 This pious office from a hand unknown.

So saying, from his shoulders he unclasp'd
 His ample robe, and strew'd the waving folds
 O'er the pale dead. Then turning, he bespake
 The slave, who stood beside him. Thou, who ledst
 Thy queen ill destin'd to the fatal tents
 Of Lacedaemon, now returning bear
 Her bleeding reliques to the Persian lord;
 Thou, and these captives, whom I free from bonds.

Art thou a Spartan (interrupts the slave)
 And dost thou counsel me to seek again
 A clime unblest'd, where freedom never dwells?

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No. Bear me to Leonidas. Alone
Shall he decide, if wretched, as I seem,
I may not claim protection from this camp.

Whoe'er thou art (amaz'd the chief replies)
Thou may'st indeed a better lot demand,
Than I, a stranger to thy hidden worth,
Unconscious offer'd. Thy ignoble garb
Conceal'd a virtue, which I now revere.
And since thy suff'ring soul hath long indur'd
The gloom of bondage, and the hated face
Of tyrants view'd, now change the horrid scene;
Here freedom reigns, and justice: come and seek
With me their great protector. Ending here,
Swift he conducts him to Laconia's king,
When Agis thus Leonidas address'd.

Lo! far superiour to the name which marks
His habit with dishonour, one, who sues
For thy protection! Here the slave subjoin'd.
I stand thy suppliant now. Thou soon shalt learn,
If I deserve thy favour. I intreat
To see th' assembled leaders of your host,
For I am fraught with tidings, which import
The weal of all the Grecians Agis straight,
Appointed by Leonidas, convenes
The various leaders. To the tent they throng,
Amidst them plac'd, the stranger thus began.

O Alpheus! Maron! hither turn your sight,
And know your brother. From their seats they start,
From either burst, with tears of transport mix'd,
The name of Polydorus. On his breast

Each fondly strives to rush, but he withstands;
While down his cheek a stream of anguish pours
From his dejected eyes in torture bent
On that vile garb, which sham'd his free born limbs.
At length these accents intermix'd with groans
Broke from his heart, while all stood wond'ring round,

You first shall know, if this unhappy slave
Yet merits your embraces. Now approach'd
Leonidas. Before him all recede,
Ev'n Alpheus' self, and yields his brother's hand,
Which in his own the gen'rous hero press'd;
Then with majestic goodness thus bespake
Th' afflicted youth, and mitigates his pains.

Forbear to mourn, thou unexampled youth.
Thy friends, thy country, all on thee shall gaze
With veneration, whose unshaken mind
The chains of Asia never could debase.
Lo! ev'ry breast is open to thy worth,
Each tongue prepares to hail thee with applause,
Who hast thy country honour'd ev'n in bonds.

He ceas'd, when Alpheus with an eager hand
Divests his brother of his base attire,
And his own mantle o'er the shoulders threw
Of Polydorus. Agis too advanc'd,
With friendly arms infolds him, and began.

Now, in thy native liberty secure,
Smile on thy past afflictions, and relate,
What chance restor'd thy virtue to the Greeks.

Then Polydorus to the list'ning chiefs.
I was a Spartan. When my tender prime

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On manhood border'd, from my native shore
 Snatch'd by Phoenician pirates, I was sold
 To Ariana, sister to the king
 And Hyperanthes. Fortune there was kind
 My bonds committing to that gentle hand.
 Yet was I still a captive, and estrang'd
 From Lacedaemon. Demaratus oft
 With friendly sorrows would my lot deplore,
 Nor less his own ill-fated virtue mourn'd,
 Lost to his country in a servile court,
 The center of corruption; where in smiles
 Is envy painted, treachery, and hate,
 And rankling malice; where alone sincere
 The dissolute seeks no disguise: where he,
 Who all possesses, that a king can give,
 Is far less happy than the meanest son
 Of liberty, and groveling, as the slave,
 Who serves his cruel pride. Yet here the sun
 Ten times his annual period hath renew'd,
 Since Polydorus hath in bondage groan'd.
 My bloom now past, or else by pining care
 Untimely wither'd, I at last return,
 And to my native land the tidings bear
 Of instant desolation. Here in grief
 He paus'd, when thus Leonidas. Proceed.
 Though from thy lips inevitable fate
 To all be threatn'd, thou art heard by none,
 Whose dauntless souls can entertain a thought,
 But how to fall the noblest. Thus the chief.
 The rest in speechless expectation wait.

Such was the solemn silence, which o'erspread
 The shrine of Ammon, or Dodona's shades,
 When anxious mortals from the mouth of Jove
 Their doom explor'd. Nor Polydorus long
 Suspends the Grecians, but resumes his tale.

As I this night accompanied the steps
 Of Ariana, e'er we reach'd the straits
 Before our view then op'ning, one appear'd
 With hasty feet now traversing the way,
 Now fix'd intensely tow'rd the Grecian wall;
 Then on a sudden starting would renew
 His restless pace. As nearer we approach'd,
 He by the moon, which glimmer'd o'er our heads,
 Descried us, when advancing he demands,
 Where bent our midnight course. I knew the voice
 Of Demaratus. To my breast I clasp'd
 The venerable exile, and replied.
 Our purpose ask not. Sparta's camp we seek,
 And oh! farewell for ever! he rejoin'd.
 Thrice happy Polydorus! Thou again
 Shalt visit Sparta, to these eyes denied.
 Upon your paths may heav'n's protection smile.
 Soon as you mix with yon triumphant tents,
 Say to the Spartans, whose unconquer'd arms
 Defend those rocks, you saw their exil'd king:
 Say, though their blind credulity depriv'd
 The wretched Demaratus of his home,
 From ev'ry joy secluded, which awaits
 The parent and the husband, from his wife,
 His offspring torn, his friends, and native gates,

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Him from his virtue could they ne'er divide :
 Say, that ev'n here, where all are kings, or slaves,
 Amid the riot of flagitious courts
 Not quite extinct the Spartan spirit glows
 Within his breast, though grief hath dim'd its fires.
 Remembring this to Lacedaemon's chief
 Report, that newly to the Persian host
 Return'd a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,
 Who as a spy had sought the Grecian tents.
 He to the tyrant magnified his art,
 Which with delusive eloquence had wrought
 The Greeks to such despair, that Asia's king
 Had been ere now their sov'reign master own'd,
 Had not the spirit of their single chief,
 By fear unconquer'd, and on death resolv'd,
 Restor'd their valour : therefore would the king
 Trust to his guidance a select'd band,
 They soon should pierce th'unguarded bounds of Greece,
 Led through a secret passage o'er the hills,
 Where no Leonidas should bar their way.
 Meantime by him the treach'rous Thebans sent
 Assurance of their aid. Th' assenting king
 At once decreed two myriads to advance
 With Hyperanthes, with Abrocomes,
 And bold Hydarnes. Ev'ry chief besides,
 Whom youth, or valour, or ambition warms,
 Rous'd by the traitor's eloquence, attends
 From all the nations, fir'd with eager zeal
 The first to enter Greece. In silence now
 The youth remains. Tremendous from his seat

Uprose Plataea's chief. His eyes were flames,
And thus on trembling Anaxander burst
The furious accents from his livid lips.

Yet ere we fall, O traitor, shall this arm
To hell's avenging furies sink thy head.

All now is tumult, ev'ry bosom swells
With rage untam'd, and vengeance. Half unsheath'd
Diomedon's impetuous falchion blaz'd.

But, as the Colchian forcerefs renown'd
In fables old, old Circe, when they fram'd
A potent spell from Erebus to wake
The dead in dark and fleeting forms to glide
Before the moon's dim twilight, with their charms
Smooth'd all the sea, and silenc'd each rude blast;

Till not a billow heav'd against the shore,
Nor ev'n the wanton-winged zephir breath'd
The lightest whisper through the magic air:
So, when thy voice, Leonidas, is heard,
Fell Discord listens; Rage with sacred awe
Subsides in silence; while Confusion slept.

Withhold this rashness (interpos'd the king)
Before we punish, let us find the guilt.
Not yet hath Persia overturn'd our tents,
Not yet her barb'rous shouts our ears alarm.
We still have time for vengeance, and to know,
If yet our swords destruction may repel,
Or how to die most glorious. Then arose
Dieneces, and thus the Greeks bespake.

Ere yet they pass our border, Xerxes' host
Must learn to conquer, and the Greeks to fly.

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The spears of Phocis guard the secret pass.
 Let instant messengers be thither sent
 To know the Persians progress. Alpheus here.

Leonidas, behold, my willing feet
 Shall to the Phocians bear thy great commands,
 Or climb the hills to mark th' approaching foe.

Thou active son of valour, (thus returns
 The chief of Lacedaemon) in my thoughts
 For ever present, when the public cause
 Demands the swift, the vigilant, and bold!
 Go and surmount the rocks: aerial height.
 And while, around, Dienece conducts
 An hundred Spartans to the Phocians aid,
 Thou from the hills observe the Persians march.

Before the purple-winged morn the night
 Retiring warn'd their conference to cease.
 They all disperse: When hastning on his course,
 And ready now to climb the lofty crags,
 O Polydorus, Alpheus thus exclaims,
 Long lost and late recover'd! we must part
 Once more, and now for ever. Thou return;
 And kiss the sacred soil, which gave thee birth,
 Which calls thee back to freedom? Dearest youth,
 I should have tears to give thee—but farewell!
 My country chides me loit'ring in thy arms.

This said, he quits his brother, and ascends,
 While Polydorus answers. Alpheus, no.
 I have the marks of bondage to erase,
 My blood must wash the shameful stain away:
 We have a father (Maron interpos'd)

Thy unexpected presence will revive
His heavy age, that childless else will mourn.
Here Polydorus with a gloomy smile.

Ill should I comfort others. View these eyes;
Faint is their light, and vanish'd is my bloom
Before its hour of ripeness. In my breast
Grief as a native will for ever dwell,
Nor yield to time. Unceasing shall my soul
Brood o'er the dire remembrance of my youth
In servitude thus wasted. Life with me
Hath lost its favour. Then in silent woe
He hangs his head. His brother pleads in vain.
He answers only with repeated groans.
Now in his view Dienecees advanc'd
With Sparta's band. On them his eyes are fix'd
Immoveable, and thus his mind revolves.

I too, like these, in Lacedaemon sprung,
Instructed once, like these, to poise the spear,
And lift the pond'rous shield. Ill-destin'd wretch!
Thy arm is now enervate, and would fail
Beneath the buckler's weight. O cruel heav'n!
Who didst compel my free-born hand to change
The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds;
Wouldst thou compensate for my chains, my shame,
My ten year's sorrows, and the black despair,
Which on my youth has prey'd; propitious once
Grant, I may bear my buckler to the field,
And known a Spartan seek the shades below.

He ceas'd, and sudden turn'd his steps aside
To find the tent of Agis; there the youth

With grateful sorrow ministers his aid,
While with a kind and hospitable hand
The gentle Agis by her lover's corse
On one sad bier the pallid beauties laid
Of Ariana. He from shackles frees
Two Persian captives, whom his gen'rous arm
That day preserv'd from slaughter, then began.

To you I give that freedom; which you fought
To snatch from me. This recompense I ask,
And this alone. Transport to Asia's camp
These bleeding reliques; bid the Persian king
Weep o'er this flow'r thus blasted in its pride;
Then say, th' all-judging gods have thus ordain'd;
Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth
Leads desolation, o'er the nations spreads
Calamity and tears, thou first shall mourn;
And through thy house destruction first shall range.

Thus charg'd, to Asia's host the captives bend.
They soon attain the Phocian wall, where now
Was Dithyrambus station'd. He perceives
The mournful bier approach. To him the fate
Of Ariana was already told.

He meets the captives, when, with weeping eyes
On Teribazus turn'd, he thus exclaims.

O! as thy arms present thee, hadst thou been
Indeed a Grecian! then thy gen'rous heart
Its valour ne'er had wasted to support
A king's injustice; then a gentler fate
Had bless'd thy life, or bleeding thou hadst known,
How sweet is death for liberty. A Greek

This friendly wish affords thee, though his head
 Had lost the honours gather'd from thy fall;
 When fortune favour'd, or propitious heav'n
 Smil'd on the better cause. Ill-fated pair!
 Whom with this stream of pity here I lave;
 But that my hostile hands, imbru'd with gore,
 Must be ungrateful to your loathing shades,
 From all the neighbouring valleys would I cull
 Their fairest growth, and strew your hearse with flow'rs
 Yet O accept these tears, and pious prayers!
 May peace attend your ashes! may your shades
 Pass o'er the silent pool to happier seats,
 Where tyrants ne'er can enter to molest
 The blissful region; but are far remov'd
 To realms of horror, where from righteous heav'n
 They bear those pains, they merit from mankind!
 He ceas'd in tears. The captives leave the wall,
 And slowly down Thermopylae proceed.

End of the Sixth Book.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VII.

BEFORE the tent of Xerxes now arriv'd
The Persian captives. On with solemn pace
And slow they move. The monarch from afar
Descries their sad demeanour. They approach;
Nor he forbids. That morn had Rumour told
The loss of half his navy dash'd on rocks
By angry blasts, or buried in the surge.
Thus, when his bleeding sister meets his eyes,
Already sunk in sadness, he had lost
His kingly pride, the parent of disdain,
And cold indifference for others' woes;
For ev'n beside his sister's nobler corse
Her humble lover now his scorn awak'd.
Tears the captive's mournful tale he heard,
And then first knew compassion; but ere long
Those traces vanish'd from the tyrant's breast:
His former gloom redoubles, for himself
His anxious bosom heaves, and now he fears,
Lest he with all his numbers should be cast
Prey to fortune. Near the monarch stood
The Spartan exile, whom he thus bespake.
O Demaratus, what will fate ordain!
Fortune turns against me! Who shall know,
How far her daring malice may extend,

Which rages now so near me, and hath made
 My house the seat of ruin? I have sent
 From my unshelter'd side my bravest chiefs,
 And choicest troops to pass the desert hill,
 Led by this Malian; may not there the Greeks
 With opposition more tremendous still
 And ruinous, than yester sun beheld,
 Resistless hold their craggy post; renew
 Their stony thunder with augmented rage,
 And send whole quarries down the rocky steep
 Again to crush my legions? Oh! unfold
 Thy secret soul, nor hide the hardest truth;
 Say what remains to hope? The exile here.

If truth unblam'd may issue from my lips,
 Too well, imperial Xerxes, you presage,
 What may befall your legions. If the Greeks,
 Arrang'd within Thermopylae, a pass
 Accessible and spacious, could repel
 With such destruction their unnumber'd foes;
 What scenes of havoc must th' untrodden paths,
 Confin'd among the craggy hills, afford?

Immers'd in care the monarch silent sat.
 Amid th' incircling peers Argestes stood,
 A potent prince. On Sipylus he reign'd,
 Whose lofty summits overlook'd the waves
 Of Hermus and Pactolus; either stream,
 Enrich'd with golden sands, its tribute bore
 To this great satrap: through the servile court
 Yet was there none more practis'd in the arts
 Of mean submission; none more skill'd to gain

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The royal favour; none, who better knew
The phrase, the looks, and gesture of a slave.
In soothing words he thus the king bespake.

If Xerxes will to spare his faithful bands,
And not exert the terrors of his pow'r;
More gentle means of conquest than by arms,
Nor less secure may artifice supply.
Renown'd Darius, thy imperial fire,
Great in the spoil of kingdoms, long in vain
The fields of proud Euphrates with his host
O'erspread; at length, confiding in the wiles
Of Zopyrus, the mighty king subdu'd
The Babylonian tow'rs: but who shall count,
What num'rous states by policy have fall'n;
And let corruption once her aid impart,
Not one shall stand. What race of men possess
Such probity and wisdom, whom the veil
Of craft may blind not, nor corruption's charm
Seduce. O Xerxes, thou, whom heav'n hath rais'd
To more than mortal greatness, canst thou find
Through all thy empire, which from India's shore
Shall reach Eurotas soon, no dazzling gift
To gain the Grecian leader? O dispel
The cloud of sadness from those sacred eyes,
And proffer freight to Lacedaemon's chief,
What may thy own munificence declare,
And win his sword to aid thee. Xerxes here,
Rous'd from his trance of sorrow, swift replied.

Wife are thy words and counsels. Go, repair,
My faithful servant, to the Grecian chief;

Fall down before him ; bid him join our arms,
And he shall reign o'er all the Grecian states.

At once Argestes leaves the monarch's side.

He now approaches to the Phocian wall.

Thence Dithyrambus leads him to the tent

Of Lacedæmon's king. Retreated there,

Alone the hero meditating sat

On future woes to Persia. At his feet

Prone bows Argestes, and begun. Thus low

Before thy awful presence Xerxes wills,

That I should bend me prostrate to the earth,

And thus accost thee. Great and matchless chief,

By fortune favour'd, and belov'd by heav'n,

Thus says the lord of Asia; join our arms,

And we reward thee with the sov'reign rule

O'er all the pow'rful states of haughty Greece.

And, O illustrious warrior, heed my words.

Think on the blifs of royalty, the pomp

Of courts, their endless pleasures, trains of slaves,

Who restless watch for thee and thy delights,

With all the glories of unrivall'd sway.

Look on th' Ionic and Æolian Greeks,

From them their phantom, liberty, is flown,

While in each province, rais'd by Xerxes' hand,

Some favour'd chief presides (exalted state,

Which envious freedom gives not) on his head

He bears the gorgeous diadem, and sees

His equals once now prostrate at his throne.

Yet how much greater thou, whom gen'ral Greece,

That teems with mightiest states, shall call her lord,

Thee only worthy. How will Greece rejoice
Around thy throne, and hail th'auspicious hour,
When thou, selected by the Persian king
To bless consenting nations with thy sway,
Didst calm the fury of unsparing war,
Which else had delug'd all with blood and flames!

He said. The chief replies not, but commands
The Thespian youth, who near the tent had watch'd,
To summon all the Grecians. He obeys.
While from his seat the hero mov'd, and bade
The Persian follow. He amaz'd attends,
Surrounded soon by all the Grecian bands;
When him the godlike Spartan thus bespake.

Here, Persian, tell thy embassy, repeat,
That to obtain my friendship Asia's lord
Bids me accept the sov'reignty of Greece;
Then view this band, whose valour shall preserve
That Greece unconquer'd, which your king bestows,
And strew your bodies on its crimson plains:
The indignation painted on their looks,
And gen'rous scorn shall answer for their chief.

The hero ceas'd, when suddenly return'd
The speed of Alpheus; all suspended straight
On him direct their sight, who thus began.

Ere I could join the Phocians, from the hill,
Which overhung the close defile, I view'd
The pow'rs of Persia. Down the narrow strait
No sooner gleam'd th'innumerable spears,
But, by our angry destiny misled,
Or some curst daemon, enemy to Greece,

The Phocians quit their station: Through the pass
 An inundation of Barbarians pours,
 The traitor Epialtes is their guide,
 And to Thermopylae directs their course.

He here concludes. Unutterable fear
 In horrid silence wrapt the list'ning throng
 Aghast; confounded; silent too were those,
 Who knew no terrour, yet with wonder mute,
 Thick-wedg'd inclos'd Leonidas around,
 Who thus with calmest elocution spoke.

I now behold my destiny compleat,
 And how at last Leonidas must die:
 Here with the Spartans shall I rest behind,
 While you, my faithful, brave allies, retreat.
 Then art thou near, thou glorious, sacred hour,
 Which shalt my country's liberty confirm!
 All hail! thou solemn period! thee the tongues
 Of Virtue, Fame, and Freedom shall record,
 And celebrate in ages yet unborn.
 Then, O farewell, Megistias wife and brave:
 Thou too experienc'd, venerable chief,
 Demophilus farewell: farewell to thee,
 Invincible Diomedon, to thee,
 Unequall'd Dithyrambus, and to all,
 You other dauntless warriors, who may claim
 Praise from my lips, and friendship from my heart.
 You after all the wonders, which your swords
 Have here accomplish'd, shall enrich your names
 With fresh renown. Your valour must compleat,
 What we begin. Here first th' astonish'd foe

A dying Spartan shall with terrour view,
And tremble, while he conquers; then, by fate
Led from his dreadful victory dismay'd
Against the phalanx of united Greece,
By your unconquer'd spears himself shall fall.

Here interpos'd the fierce Plataean chief.

By the twelve gods enthron'd in heav'n supreme,
By my fair name unsullied yet I swear,
Ne'er shall thy eyes, Leonidas, behold
Diomedon forsake thee. First let strength
Desert my limbs, and valour shun my heart.
Did I not face the Marathonian war?
Have I not seen Thermopylae? O Fame,
What more canst thou bestow, or I receive?
Where can I living purchase brighter praise,
Than dying here? A more illustrious tomb
Where can I gain, than underneath the heaps
Of Persians fall'n the victims of our sword.
He ended, when Demophilus subjoin'd.

O king of Sparta, pride of human race,
Whom none e'er equall'd, but the seed of Jove,
Thy own forefather number'd with the gods,
Lo! I am old. With faltering steps I tread
The prone descent of years. The winged hours
By me, as one unequal to their speed,
Who can no more their fleeting joys attain,
Unheeding slide. My youth my country claim'd,
My age no more can serve her; what remains?
What eligible hope can wisdom form,
But to die well? Upon this glorious earth

With thee, unrivall'd hero, will I close
 The eve of life. So spake the hoary chief,
 When Dithyrambus next: O first of Greeks,
 Me too think worthy to attend thy fame
 With this most dear and venerable man
 For ever honour'd from my tend'rest age,
 Ev'n till on life's extremity we part.
 Nor too aspiring let my hopes be deem'd;
 Should the Barbarian in his triumphs mark
 My youthful limbs among the gory heaps,
 Thence may his fears be doubled, when again
 He meets in fields hereafter to be known
 The Grecian standards, trembling at a foe,
 To whom the flow'r, and blooming joys of life
 Are less alluring than a noble fate.

To him Demophilus. Wilt thou too bleed,
 My Dithyrambus?—But I here withhold
 All counsel from thee, who art wise, as brave.
 If then thy magnanimity retain
 Thee too with great Leonidas to fall,
 At either's side our limbs shall press the ground,
 And drop together in the arms of death;
 So if th' attentive traveller we draw
 To our cold reliques, wondring shall he trace
 The diff'rent scene, and pregnant with applause,
 O wise old man, exclaim, thou well hast chose
 The hour of fate: and, O unequall'd youth,
 Who to thy country didst thy bloom devote,
 Mayst thou remain for ever dear to Fame!
 May Time rejoice to name thee! and may Peace

With gentlest pinions hover o'er thy urn!

This said, the hero with his lifted shield
His face o'er-shades, and drops a secret tear;
Not this the tear of anguish, but deriv'd
From fond affection grown mature with time;
Which in a feeble mind to pain had turn'd,
But in the Thespian's firm and virtuous breast,
Alone a manly tenderness awak'd
Unmix'd with pity, or with vain regret.

Megistias last address'd the Spartan chief.
Thou, whom the gods have chosen to exalt
Above mankind in virtue and renown,
Do call not me presumptuous, who implore
Among these heroes thy regardful ear!
To Lacedæmon I a stranger came:
Thou there preserv'd me, there with honours clad;
Nor have I yet one benefit repay'd.
That now the gen'rous Spartans may behold
To me their high beneficence not vain,
Here to their cause I consecrate my breath.

Not so Megistias (interpos'd the king)
Thou and thy son retreat. Again the seer.
Forbid it, thou eternally ador'd,
Jove, confirm my persevering soul!
Or let my fear neglect this happy hour
To shew the Spartans, I deserv'd their care.
Thou, Menalippus, hear the king's command,
And my paternal tenderness revere.
Do thou withdraw thee from me, to my hand
My arms resigning. Fortune will supply

Fresh toil for valour. Vanquish then, or find
 A glorious grave; but spare thy father's eye
 The bitter anguish to behold thy youth
 Untimely bleed before him. Grief suspends
 His speech, and interchangeably their arms
 Impart their last embraces. Either wept,
 The hoary parent, and the blooming son.
 But from his temples the pontific wreath
 Megistias now unloosens, and resigns
 His hallow'd vestments; while the youth with tears
 The helmet buckles o'er his snowy locks,
 And on his breast adjusts the radiant mail.

While such contempt of life, such fervid zeal
 To die with glory animate the Greeks,
 Far other thoughts possess Argestes' soul.
 Amaze with mingled terrour smote his heart;
 Cold drops, distill'd from ev'ry pore, bedew
 His shiv'ring limbs; his bosom pants; his knees
 Yield to their burthen; ghastly pale his cheeks,
 Pale are his lips and trembling: such the minds
 Of slaves corrupt, to them the beauteous face
 Of Virtue turns to horror. But the chief
 Of Lacedaemon now the wretch bespake.

Return to Xerxes; tell him, on this rock
 The Grecians faithful to their post await
 His chosen myriads; tell him, thou hast seen,
 How far the lust of empire is below
 A free-born mind: and tell him, to behold
 A tyrant humbled, and by virtuous death
 To seal my country's freedom, is a good

surpassing all, his boasted pow'r can give.
 He said, the Persian hastens through the pass.
 Not now once more Diomedon arose.
 Wrath overcasts his forehead, while he spake.
 Yet more must stay and bleed. Inglorious Thebes
 ne'er shall receive her traitors back, but here
 shall they atone their perfidy by death,
 ev'n from their swords, to whom their abject hearts
 have sacrific'd their faith. Nor dare to hope,
 ye vile deserters of the public weal,
 ye coward slaves, that mingled with the heaps
 of those, who perish in their country's cause,
 you shall your shame conceal. Whoe'er shall pass
 along this field of glorious slain, and trace
 with veneration ev'ry nobler corse;
 his soul, though warm with generous applause,
 while shall curb the transport to repeat
 his execrations o'er your impious heads,
 on whom that fate, which gives to others fame,
 infamy and vengeance. Dreadful thus
 on the pale Thebans sentence he pronounc'd,
 like Rhadamanthus, from th' infernal throne
 when with inexorable frowns he doom'd
 the guilty dead to ever-during pain;
 while Phlegethon its flaming billows roll'd
 before their sight, and ruthless furies shook
 their hissing serpents. All the Greeks assent
 with clamours echoing through the concave rock.
 Forth Anaxander in th' assembly stood,
 and thus began with indignation feign'd.

If yet your clamours, Grecians, are allay'd,
 Behold, I stand before you to demand,
 Why these my brave companions, who alone
 Of all the Thebans under my command
 Durst force their passage through dissuading crouds.
 To join your host, should now be traitors deem'd;
 Accus'd by one alone, a banish'd wretch,
 Whom Lacedaemon in her anger drove
 Far from her confines; one, who meanly sought
 A servile court for shelter: has he drawn
 Such virtues thence, that Sparta, who before
 Held him unworthy of his native soil,
 Should trust him now before auxiliar friends?
 Injurious Greeks! we scorn the thought of flight.
 Let Asia bring her millions; unconstrain'd
 We wait the conflict, and for Greece will die.
 Thus in the garb of virtue he adorn'd
 Necessity, deluding ev'ry Greek
 Except Laconia's hero. He perceiv'd
 Through all its fair disguise the traitor's heart.
 So, when at first mankind, in science rude,
 Rever'd the moon, as bright with native beams,
 Some sage, that walk'd with nature through her works,
 By wisdom led, discern'd, the various orb
 Itself was dark, in foreign splendours clad.
 Now unexpected with his troop return'd
 Dieneces, and thus to Sparta's king.

I need not tell thee, that the Persian pow'rs
 Have pass'd the secret strait. This night they halt,
 But with the morning will invade us here.

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We come to die with thee. United thus,
Our strength a fiercer contest shall maintain ;
Whence a more bright example to our friends,
And stronger terrour of the Grecian name.

He said, when thus Leonidas began.
O Spartans, bear, and all you other Greeks,
Whose matchless virtue shall inroll your names
In time's eternal records, and inhance
Your country's lustre ; lo ! the setting sun
Inflames the broad horizon. All retire,
And in your tents invoke the pow'r of sleep
To aid your vigour, and to give your limbs
Unwearied patience of continued toil ;
But when the second watch begins, let all
With mutual exhortation rouse to arms :
For soon, as Cynthia from the vault of heav'n
Hath hung her shining lamp, through Asia's host
Shall death with horror and amazement rage.
Their camp is open to our swords, depriv'd
Of all its chosen warriors. But I charge
All, ev'n the Spartans, who are maim'd, or weak,
To pain, or toil unequal, from our camp
This hour to hasten. You, our brave allies
Of Corinth, Phlius, with th' Arcadian bands
And Mycenaeans must not yet return,
But here, while we repose, in arms remain ;
When we our tents abandon, then depart.
He said, all heard obedient, and dispers'd ;
While to his tent the godlike chief repairs,
And with him Agis, whom he thus bespake.

O Agis, hear and mark my last command.
 With wary skill dispose the nightly guard,
 That no deserter from the Theban tents
 May reach the camp of Asia, or ascend
 To those now halting on the neighb'ring hills;
 Nor yet with us the faithless band must join.
 Not with such base associates must we trust
 Our great design. Their perfidy might soon
 Find means to rouse the unsuspecting foe,
 And all our glorious enterprize confound.
 Then, O my faithful Agis, e'er we move,
 While on the solemn sacrifice intent,
 As Lacedaemon's sacred laws ordain,
 Our pray'rs we offer to the tuneful nine,
 Do thou in whispers charge the Theban train
 Slow and in silence to disperse and fly.
 This said, they parted. On his couch alone
 Reclines the hero, where he thus revolves.

My fate is now impending. O my heart!
 What more auspicious period could I chuse
 For death, than now; when beating high with joy
 Thou tell'st me, I am happy? If to live,
 Or die, as virtue dictates, be to know
 The purest bliss; if she her charms display
 Still beauteous, still unfading, still serene
 To youth, to age, to death; whatever be
 Those other climes of uncorruptive joy,
 Which heav'n in dark futurity conceals,
 Still here, O Virtue, thou art all our good.
 Then what a black, unspeakable reverse

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The wretched offspring of injustice prove?
What in the struggle of departing day,
When life's last glimpse extinguishing presents
Th' unknown, inextricable gloom of death?
But can I paint the terrors of a breast,
Where guilt resides? Leonidas, forego
The horrible conception, seek again
Thy own untroubled heart, and grateful bow
To those benignant pow'rs, who fram'd thy mind
In crimes unfruitful, never to admit
The black impression of a guilty thought.
Else could I fearless thus relinquish life?
No. Such unshaken calmness from th' unjust
Is ever absent. Oft in them the rage
Of some prevailing passion for a time
Suppresses fear. Oft hurried on they lose
The sense of danger, when dominion, pow'r,
And purpled pomp their dazzled sight enchant.
Yet still the joys of life alone they seek.
But he, who calmly meets resistless fate,
When glory only, and the gen'ral good
Invite him forward, must possess a soul,
Which, all content deducing from itself,
Can by unerring virtue's constant light
Discern, when death is worthy of his choice.
The man, thus great and happy, in the scope
Of his large mind is stretch'd beyond his date;
Ev'n on this shore of being he in thought
Supremely blest anticipates the good,
Which late posterity from him derives.

The hero clos'd his meditation here.
The swelling transports of his mind subside
In soft oblivion, while the silken plumes
Of sleep envelop his extended limbs.

End of the Seventh Book.

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LEONIDAS.

BOOK VIII.

SCARCE was begun the second watch of night,
When his pavilion Agis left, and fought
The chief of Lacedaemon. Him he found
Spread on his tranquil couch, while, o'er his face
Diffus'd, a glad serenity with smiles
His slumber painted; like an ev'ning sky
Yet streak'd with ruddy light, when summer suns
Have veil'd their beaming foreheads. Transport fill'd
The eye of Agis. Friendship swell'd his heart,
And veneration. On his knee inclin'd,
The hero's hand he kiss'd, and thus began.

O thou with more than human virtues great,
Accept this homage! and may gentle sleep
Yet longer close thy eyelids, that, unblam'd,
I thus may bow before thee. Thus he spake,
And, prostrate bent, his godlike friend rever'd,
Whose eye the shades of slumber now forsake.
So, when, new rising, heav'n's resplendent orb
Illumines first the sable skirts of night,
The white-rob'd Magi, or the Indian seers
Are seen from Ganges, or Euphrates' side,
Before th' emerging glory bow'd to hail
The radiant emblem of th' immortal mind.
Both heroes rose, and mix'd their friendly arms,

And now to Agis had the Spartan king
 Disclos'd his soul; when lo! the Grecian chiefs,
 All rous'd, advancing with the sudden gleam
 Of armour pierc'd the twilight shade. With joy
 Leonidas accosts them. O thrice hail!
 My virtuous friends. Approach, and all attend,
 While I relate, and you with wonder hear.
 This night no sooner sleep oppress'd my brows,
 But o'er my head the empyreal form
 Of my great sire Alcides seem'd display'd.
 I saw his magnitude divine; his voice
 I heard, his solemn mandate to arise.
 I rose. He bade me follow: I obey'd.
 Up to a mountain, whose ethereal brow
 Th' involving clouds divided, we ascend.
 E'er long we rested, suddenly the howl
 Of wolves and dogs, the vulture's piercing shriek,
 The yell of ev'ry beast and fowl of prey
 Within my ears discordant broke. I turn'd.
 When lo! a surface, all with gore deform'd,
 Beyond my view illimitable stretch'd,
 One vast expanse of horror. There a corse,
 Which with its huge dimensions seem'd to hide
 Th' unbounded plain, lay welt'ring, red with wounds
 Delv'd in th' enormous limbs, which bleeding gorg'd
 The vulture's famine. Wond'ring I beheld,
 When from behind I heard a second sound,
 Like surges tumbling o'er a craggy shore.
 Again I turn'd. An ocean there appear'd
 With riven keels, and shrouds, and shiver'd oars,

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With arms and mangled carcases bestrewn
 Innumeros. The billows foam'd with blood,
 And whelm'd a crimson deluge o'er the strand.
 But, where the waters, unobserv'd before,
 Between two adverse shores contracting roll'd
 A stormy tide, upon the beach, forlorn,
 One of majestic stature I descried
 In ornaments imperial. Oft on me
 He bent his clouded eye-balls. On my name
 With imprecations oft he call'd aloud,
 Then rent his splendid garments, and his head
 In rage divested of its graceful hairs.
 Impatient now he ey'd a slender skiff,
 Which, mounted on the curling foam, approach'd.
 With indignation, and reluctant grief
 Once more his sight reverting, he embark'd
 Amid the perils of the frowning waves.
 O thou, whose virtue rank'd thee with the gods
 (I here exclaim'd) instruct me, what produc'd
 This desolation; when the god return'd.
 Let thy astonish'd eye again review,
 What thou didst late abhor. I look'd and saw
 A land, where Plenty with disporting hand
 Pour'd all the fruits of Amalthea's horn;
 Where bloom'd the olive, and the clustering vine
 With its broad foliage mantled ev'ry hill;
 Where Ceres with exuberance inrob'd
 The pregnant bosom of the fields in gold;
 Where spacious towns, whose circuits proud contain'd
 The dazzling works of wealth, unnumber'd shone,

The strength and splendour of the peopled land.
Then in a moment clouds obscur'd my sight,
And all was vanish'd from my waking eyes.

Thrice we salute the omen (thus began
The sage Megistias) in thy mystic dream
I see the Grecian victories. The earth,
The deep shall own their triumph; and the tears
Of Asia, and of Lybia shall bewail
Their offspring cast before the vulture's beak,
And all the monstrous natives of the main.
Those joyous fields of plenty shall be Greece,
Enrich'd with conquest, and Barbarian spoils.
And whom thou saw'st in regal vesture clad,
Print on the sands his solitary steps,
Is Xerxes foil'd, and fugitive from Greece.

Megistias thus, while ev'ry bosom felt
Enthusiastic rapture, joy beyond
All sense, and all conception but of those,
Who die to save their country. Here again
Leonidas th' exulting chiefs address'd.

Since happiness from virtue is deriv'd,
Who for his country dies, that moment proves
Most happy, as most virtuous. Such our lot.
To this the gods shall add eternal fame.
But now go forth, Megistias, and with speed
Prepare the victim, and the sacred flames;
That to the Muses, as the Spartan law
Commands, our pray'rs and off'rings may be paid,
E'er to yon camp our hostile feet we bend.
But, O remember, from the solemn rites

Let ev'ry sound be absent, not the pipe,
 Nor ev'n the music-breathing flute be heard.
 Meantime, ye leaders, ev'ry band instruct
 To move in silence, nor with shouts alarm
 The midnight stillness. Mindful of their charge,
 The chiefs depart. Leonidas provides
 His various armour. First the breast-plate arms
 His ample chest. O'er this the hero spreads
 The mailed cuirass, from his shoulders hung.
 The shining belt infolds his mighty loins.
 Next on his stately temples he crests
 The plumed helm, then grasps his pond'rous shield;
 Where nigh the center on the swelling brass
 Th'inimitable artist had imboss'd
 The shape of great Alcides, whom to gain
 Two goddesses contended. Pleasure here
 Won with soft wiles th' attracted eye, and there
 The form of Virtue dignified the scene.
 In her majestic sweetness was disclos'd
 The mind sublime and happy. From her lips
 Them'd eloquence to flow. With looks serene,
 At fixt intent upon the son of Jove,
 She wav'd her hand, where, winding to the skies,
 Her paths ascended. On the summit stood
 Time, and protended her eternal trump,
 Recumbent on a trophy near to heav'n.
 The youth attentive to her wisdom own'd
 The prevalence of Virtue; while his eye
 With all the spirit, which redeem'd the world
 From tyranny and monsters, ardent flam'd;

Not undescried by Pleasure, where she lay
 Stretch'd on a gorgeous carpet, which bespread
 The meadow with magnificence. Around
 Were flourets strewn, and wantonly in rills
 Soft streams maeander'd. All relax'd her limbs;
 Nor wanting yet solicitude to gain,
 What lost she fear'd, as struggling with despair,
 She seem'd collecting all her pow'r of charms,
 And with excess of sweet allurements smil'd:
 In vain; for Virtue sway'd Alcides' mind.
 Hence all his labours. Trac'd with various art,
 They fill'd the surface of the spacious targe.
 This portraiture of glory on his arm
 Leonidas supports. Then forth he tow'rs
 From his pavilion. With their troops array'd
 The chiefs attended. Flaming torches blaz'd
 In ev'ry hand. And now with silent pace
 All to the solemn sacrifice proceed.
 First Polydorus with the hallow'd knife,
 And barley strew'd with sacred salt advanc'd,
 Diomedon beside him, in his grasp
 A weighty mace sustaining. Like the rest
 All bright in armour with his shield and spear
 Megistias follow'd, an unspotted priest,
 And dauntless warrior. From on high his helm
 With wreaths around the shining crest reveal'd
 His sacerdotal honours. By the horns,
 Where laurels twin'd, with Alpheus Maron leads
 The consecrated ox. And lo! behind,
 Leonidas approaches. Ne'er before

With such transcending majesty he trod,
Nor his own virtue, as that hour, enjoy'd.
Then venerable moves the Thespian chief,
And great Dienece. To them the bloom
Of Dithyrambus glowing with the sense
Of future praise succeeds, with graceful steps
The gen'rous Agis next; the Thebans last
Repining and inglorious. Then slow march
The host all mute, nor shake their brazen arms;

Not from Thermopylae remote the hills
Of Oeta, yielding to a fruitful dale,
Within their side half-circling had inclos'd
A fair expanse with verdure smooth. The bounds
Were edg'd with wood o'erlook'd by snowy cliffs,
Which from the clouds bent frowning. From a rock
Above the loftiest summit of the groves
A tumbling torrent wore the shagged stone,
Then, gleaming through the interwoven shade,
The valley water'd. O'er the level shone
Its glassy bosom, and with placid waves
The smiling lawn divided. Near the banks,
Which flow'rs made various, new-erected stood
A rustic altar, which a chosen train,
Appointed by Megistias, rais'd with turf,
Cut by their falchions from the verdant mead:
Broad was the surface, high with piles of wood,
The plenteous tribute of th' adjacent groves,
All interspers'd with laurel. Here a vase,
Fill'd with the briny waters of the sea
(More pure than ev'ry stream or fountain deem'd)

Was plac'd beside the altar. There with wine
 Unmix'd capacious goblets stood arrang'd.
 Here is the victim brought. Megistias streight
 His helm unloosens. With his hoary head
 Uncover'd round the solemn pile he treads,
 And with a branch of laurel scatters wide
 The sacred moisture of the main. His hand
 With mingled salt and barley next bestrews
 The altar, and the victim. O'er the horns
 Th' inverted goblet foaming with the grape
 Diffus'd the rich libation. Now advanc'd
 Diomedon. Megistias gave command.
 Down sunk the victim with a deathful stroke,
 Nor groan'd. Megistias buries in the throat
 The hallow'd steel. A crimson deluge flows.
 Swift from the limbs the fuming hide is torn;
 The flesh dissever'd on the altar heap'd.
 Now smoaks the pile, then sudden flames abroad:
 A burst of splendour dissipates the dark.
 Greece throngs around. Each lifts a sparkling brand,
 With beaming javelins intermix'd, and shields,
 And polish'd helms, which multiply the blaze.
 Meantime the great Leonidas drew nigh,
 And stood before the altar. There his helm
 Unclass'd to Agis he commits, his shield
 And spear to Diithyrambus, then, his arms
 Extending, thus in supplication spoke.

Harmonious daughters of Olympian Jove,
 Who, on the top of Helicon ador'd,
 And high Parnassus, with delighted ears

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Bend to the warble of Castalia's wave,
 And Aganippe's murmurs, if from thence
 We must invoke your presence; or along
 The ridge of neighb'ring Pindus if your steps
 Now wander through your consecrated bow'rs,
 Thence turn, ye Muses, nor for once disdain
 Each with her beauteous form these hills to grace,
 And stand th'immortal witness of our fate!
 But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove
 And you most honour. Let her sacred eyes
 Approve her dying Grecians, let her voice
 With exultation tell the earth and heav'ns,
 These are her sons; then strike your tuneful shells,
 And with our praise bid harmony rejoice.
 Record us guardians of our parents age,
 Our matrons virtue, and our infants bloom,
 And glorious bulwarks of our country's laws,
 Who shall ennoble the historian's page,
 Or on the joyous festival inspire
 With loftier strains the virgins choral song.
 Then, O celestial maids, on yonder camp
 Let night sit heavy, and a sleep, like death,
 Weigh down the eye of Asia! O infuse
 A cool, untroubled spirit in our breasts,
 Which may in silence guide our daring feet
 Through all the paths of slaughter, nor affright
 The dark with tumult, till the dying groans
 Of gasping tyrants into horror wake
 The midnight calm! Then turn Destruction wild,
 Bid Terror and Confusion revel round,

And in one carnage heap the Barb'rous ranks,
 Their horse, and chariots. Let the spurning steed
 Imbrue his hoofs with blood, and shatter'd cars
 Crush with their brazen weight the prostrate necks
 Of kings, and purpled chiefs incircled round
 By nations fall'n.—You, countrymen and friends,
 My last commands attend. Your gen'ral's voice
 Once more salutes you, not to rouse the brave,
 Or minds resolv'd and dauntless to confirm.
 Too well by this expiring blaze I view
 Impatient valour flash from ev'ry eye.
 But temper well your ardour, and your lips
 Close on the rising transport. Low! how sleep
 Hath folded millions in its black embrace.
 No sound is wafted from th'unnumber'd foe.
 The winds themselves are silent. All conspires
 To this great sacrifice, where thousands soon
 Shall only wake to die. Perhaps our swords
 This night may send ev'n Xerxes' self to lead
 Th' innumerable train of Persian ghosts
 To Pluto's dreary shade, unless reserv'd
 From all this ruin to lament his shame,
 And future flight, when Greece confounds that pow'r,
 Which we will shake. But now the second watch
 Is verging to its period, and the moon
 Prepares to glimmer on our darksome steps.
 Let each his head distinguish with a wreath
 Of twining laurel, then the goblet crown,
 And share the victim. Take your last repast,
 For with your fathers, and the heroes old

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You next shall banquet in the blest abodes.

While thus the hero, through the thronging files,
Presenting round a hideous depth of war,
All shook with ardour their erected spears,
Thick, as the fruitful growth of lofty pines,
Which from high Pelion's cloud-invested brow
To heav'n's blue vault their stately honours bear.
Megistias soon through all the band divides
The sacred laurel : snatch'd with eager zeal,
By ev'ry hand, and round each helmet wove,
It blends its verdure with the floating plumes.
Then is the victim portion'd, while the bowl
Flows with the vine's impurpled stream. Aloof
The Theban train in wan dejection mute
Brood o'er their shame, or cast a frightened eye
On that determin'd virtue, which, unmov'd
At fate's approach, with chearful lips could taste
The sparkling goblet, and with joy partake
That last and glorious banquet. Ev'n the heart
Of Anaxander now forgets its wiles,
Its fear no more dissembling. Agis here,
For ever mindful of his friend's command,
Mix'd with the Thebans, and in whispers thus.

Leonidas permits you to retire.

While in the rites of sacrifice employ'd,
None heed your motions. Separate, and fly
With silent steps. At once the Theban troop
Its ranks dissolving from the Greeks withdraws.
Unseen it moulders from the host, like snow,
Which from the mountains in ten thousand rills,

Soon as the sun exerts his orient beam,
 Descends soft-trickling, while the hoary heap
 Insensibly decays. The Grecians soon
 Conclude the solemn banquet, and their chief
 Now reassumes his arms. Before his step
 The crowd rolls backward. In their gladden'd sight
 His crest irradiate with th' uplifted brands
 Its purple splendour shakes. The tow'ring oak
 Thus from a lofty promontory waves
 Its majesty of verdure, while with joy
 The sailor marks its heav'n-ascending pride,
 Which from afar directs his foamy course
 Along the pathless ocean: so the Greeks
 Exulting gaz'd, as down their op'ning ranks
 Their chief proceeds; from whose majestic grace
 A soul like thine, O Phidias, might conceive
 In Parian marble, or effulgent brass,
 The form of great Apollo; when the god,
 Won by the pray'rs of man's afflicted race,
 In arms forsook his lucid throne to pierce
 The monster Python in the Delphian vale.
 Close by the hero Polydorus waits
 To guide destruction through the Asian tents,
 As the young eagle near his parent's side,
 In wanton flight essays his vig'rous wings,
 Ere long with her to penetrate the clouds,
 To dart impetuous on the fleecy train,
 And dye his beak with gore; by Sparta's king
 The injur'd Polydorus thus prepares
 His arm for death, and feasts his angry soul.

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With promis'd vengeance: his impatient thoughts
 Ev'n now transport him furious to the seat
 Of his long sorrows not with shackled hands,
 But now once more a Spartan with his shield
 And dreadful spear to lead his country's bands,
 And with them vengeance. Nor the rest of Greece
 Neglect to form. Their helmets now unite
 Their various plumage, as th' intertwining boughs
 Mix their broad foliage in Dodona's grove;
 Or like the cedars on the Syrian hills,
 Which with their shady texture, as with night,
 The gloomy foil o'ercast. In order'd ranks
 While thus they stand, behold a warlike form
 In gleaming arms slow-moving through the shade,
 Led by a slave, approach'd Laconia's king,
 And thus address'd him. O Leonidas,
 Thou seest before thee Eurytus, a name
 To thee and ev'ry Spartan not unknown.
 Thy ruling voice forbade thee maim'd to stay;
 I, whose dark orbs no longer know the sun,
 Immers'd in sudden blindness since our march
 From Lacedaemon, with the rest withdrew,
 Not to revisit Sparta, but, resolv'd
 To meet the Persians, in the public way
 Hst; not long, before th' increasing sound
 Of trampling feet alarm'd me, which I deem'd
 Were Persia's numbers rushing from the hills:
 I started upward, grasping in my hand
 My spear and buckler, by my slave withheld,
 Who told me, they were Thebans. Lo! I bear

The tidings of their fight. And now, my chief
 And countrymen, faréwel. Do you proceed,
 With death and terrour fill the hostile camp;
 While I the fury of th' exulting foe
 Descending from the mountains here await
 To yield the last remains of tedious life,
 Now to my country uselefs, and to me,
 And close these shaded eyes in endless night.

He ceas'd, when thus Leonidas began.
 Then stay, my faithful soldier, and obtain
 Not the least honours in this glorious night;
 And you, my brave associates, all exult;
 One spirit now inspires us; from our band
 Doubt, fear, and treason with the Thebans fly:
 While all with mutual confidence advance,
 And equal fires. This said, oncè more the king
 On the deep phalanx his attentive eye
 Reverts, and through the ruddy gleam descries
 One face of gladness; but th' illustrious van
 He most contemplates: Agis, Alpheus there,
 Megistias, Maron, and Plataea's chief,
 Dieneces, Demophilus are drawn;
 And Dithyrambus. They their fixed sight
 On him too bend with inexpressive joy,
 With love, and veneration, till they hear
 His last command; when instant to the earth
 Are cast th' extinguish'd brands. On all around
 Drops sudden darkness, on the hills, the woods;
 The silver stream, the rocks, and floating main;
 It now was midnight. To the hostile camp

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With steps compos'd and silent down the pass
 The phalanx moves. Each patient bosom hush'd
 Its struggling spirit, nor in whispers breath'd
 The rapt'rous ardour, virtue then inspir'd;
 But all await the moment doom'd to give
 The Barb'rous millions to their deathful steel:
 Solou'ring clouds, expanding from the north,
 Awhile suspend their horrors, destin'd soon
 To blaze in lightnings, and to burst in storms.

End of the Eighth Book.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IX.

THE waining moon display'd her gleaming horns,
When o'er th' unguarded bound of Asia's camp
Now pass'd the Grecians. Through th'unnumber'd tents,
Where all was mute and tranquil, they pursue
Their silent march. The eastern world around
Lay stretch'd in slumber, motionless, and deaf,
Wrapt in the dead security of night,
Nor mark'd the steps of Fate. The wary Greeks,
By Polydorus guided, still proceed.
Ev'n to the center of th' extensive host
Unseen they pierc'd, when now th' imperial tent
Yet distant rose before them. Wide around
The proud pavilion stretch'd an ample space,
Where myriads might imbattle. Here a band
Of chosen Persians watchful round their king
Held their nocturnal station. As the hearts
Of anxious nations, menac'd with the waste
Of meagre famine, and the ruthless sword,
Sink in their frozen bosoms, while despair
Sees fear-engender'd fantoms in the sky,
Aërial hosts amid the clouds array'd,
Which seem to shake the firmament with war,
Portending woe and death; the Persians thus
Are smote with consternation, as the moon

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By her faint beam discover'd from afar
The glimpse of Grecian arms. With sudden cries
They waken Horror, which to Xerxes' couch,
And o'er th' astonish'd host swift-winged flew,
Dispelling sleep and silence. All the camp
Pours forth its numbers naked, pale, unarm'd,
Wild with amazement, blinded by dismay,
To ev'ry foe obnoxious; when at once,
Plung'd in ten thousand breasts, the Grecian steel
Reeks with destruction. Deluges of blood
Float o'er the field, and foam around the heaps
Of wretches slain unconscious of the hand,
Which mows them down by legions. From his couch
The lord of Asia, and of Lybia starts,
(Amaze, affright, distraction in his look)
And sees in thought united Greece advance.
Where then was fled thy empty regal pride,
The hope of glory, and the lust of pow'r?
What then avail'd th' innumerable range
Of thy huge camp, save only to conceal
Thy trembling steps, O Xerxes, while thou fliest.
Leonidas before the Grecian van
Through bleeding thousands hews his dreadful way.
Before him Terroure strides. Gigantic Death,
And Desolation at his side attend,
With all the furies of insatiate war.
To Xerxes' tent the hero speeds, nor finds
His victim. Ardent throngs of Grecians fill
The stately mansion; to the ground are hurl'd
The glitt'ring ensigns of imperial pow'r:

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The diadem, the sceptre, late ador'd
 And fear'd by millions, underneath their feet
 With mingled rage and scorn the Grecians crush,
 A sacrifice to Freedom. Now return
 The furious bands. Leonidas exalts
 For new destruction his resistless spear,
 When sudden night o'ershrouds the spangled heav'ns,
 And clouds condensing intercept the moon.
 Black o'er the furrow'd main the raging east
 In whirlwinds sweeps the surge. Now roars the coast
 The crashing forests, and the cavern'd rocks.
 Swift through the camp the hurricane impells
 Its dire career, when Asia's numbers, veil'd
 Amid the shelt'ring horrors of the storm,
 Evade the Spartan lance. The Grecians halt,
 By great Leonidas restrain'd, and wait
 Near Xerxes' tent their mighty leader's will.

Beside the high pavilion, from the time
 That Xerxes near Thermopylae had drawn
 His num'rous bands, perpetual fire had shone;
 Before whose sacred light the Persian lord
 Was wont among his Magi to adore
 The pow'r of Oromasdes: piles of wood
 Lay nigh, prepar'd to feed the constant flame.
 These on the altar by the Greeks are strewn,
 So wills Laconia's hero; while the winds
 Excite the blaze, his phalanx he divides;
 Four bands are form'd, by Dithyrambus led,
 By Alpheus, by Diomedon, the last
 Himself commands. The word is giv'n; the Greek

Press to the fire; soon shrink the burning heaps;
 Destructive flames they brandish, and, injoin'd
 To reassemble at the regal tent,
 By various paths the hostile camp invade.
 Resistless desolation now involves
 The Malian fields, as o'er the eastern tents
 From diff'rent stations flew ten thousand brands,
 Hurl'd by the Greeks unrespited. The winds,
 With violence redoubled breathing round
 Tempestuous rage, exasperate the blaze.
 The conflagration, like a sea, expands;
 Collected now from ev'ry part, it forms
 One waving surface of unbounded fire.
 In ruddy volumes mount the curling flames
 To heav'n's dark vault, and paint the midnight clouds.
 So, when the north emits its purpled lights,
 The undulating radiance streaming wide,
 As with a burning canopy, invests
 Th' ethereal concave. Oeta now disclos'd
 Its forehead glitt'ring with eternal frost,
 While down the rocks the foamy torrents shone.
 Far o'er the main the pointed rays were thrown;
 Night snatch'd her mantle from the ocean's breast;
 The billows glimmer from the distant shores.
 But where ascends a pillar huge of smoke,
 With wreathing flames incircled, Horror there
 And Death on great Leonidas attend.
 He bade th' exulting Polydorus lead,
 Where Asia's horse and chariots stood arrang'd;
 There at his word devouring Vulcan feasts

On all the tribute, which Theſſalia's meads
Yield to the ſcythe, and riots on the heaps
Of Ceres, emptied of the ripen'd grain.
A flood of fire envelops all the ground;
The cordage burſts of ev'ry blazing tent;
Down ſink the roofs, and overwhelm the throng
Of wretches panting from the Spartan ſword,
Cloſe-wedg'd with fear; the Libyan chariot burns,
Th'Arabian camel, and the Perſian ſteed
Bound through the fiery deluge; wild with pain
They ſhake their ſinged manes, with madding hoofs
Daſh through the blood of thouſands, mix'd with flames,
That rage augmented by the whirlwind's blaſt.

Meantime the ſcepter'd lord of half the globe
Through the wide tumult, like a guilty ſlave,
From tent to tent precipitates his flight.
Diſpers'd are all his ſatrapſ; Pride itſelf
Shuns his dejected brow; Deſpair alone
With pale Confuſion, and with frantic Fear
Wait on th'imperial fugitive, and ſhew,
As round the camp his eye diſtracted roves,
No limits to deſtruction. Now was ſeen
Aurora mounting from the eaſtern hills
In roſy ſandals, and with dewy locks:
The winds ſubſide before her, darkneſs flies,
And ſtreams of light proclaim the chearful day.
When now at Xerxes' tent the Grecian band
Was re-united. What could Fortune more
To aid the valiant, and to gorge revenge?
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Hath emptied all its horrors; ev'n the hand
 Of languid Slaughter drops its crimson steel;
 Nor Nature longer can sustain the toil
 Of ever-during conquest. Yet what pow'r
 Among the Grecians once again reviv'd [call'd
 Their drooping warmth; new-brac'd their nerves, and
 Their wearied swords to deeds of brighter fame?
 What but th' inspiring hope of glorious death
 To crown their labour, and th' auspicious look
 Of their heroic chief, which, still unchang'd,
 Still with superiour majesty declar'd,
 No toil had yet relax'd his matchless strength,
 Nor worn the vigour of his godlike soul.
 Down to the pass with gentle march he leads
 Th' imbattled warriors There behind the shrubs,
 Which ne'er the verdant feet of Oeta sprung,
 Beside the entrance of the straits the Greeks
 In ambush lay. The tempest now was calm'd;
 Soft breezes only from the Malian wave
 O'er each grim face, besmear'd with smoke and gore,
 Their cool refreshment breath'd. The healing gale
 Dispells the languor from their harass'd limbs,
 Which swell with strength returning. After all
 Th' incessant labours of the horrid night,
 Through flames and war continu'd, they prepare
 Order'd battle to confront the pow'rs
 Of Hyperanthes, that selected band
 From Asia's numbers, destin'd with the morn
 To pass the mountains in triumphant march
 With strength unwasted, and with souls elate,

Not long the Greeks in expectation stood
 Impatient. Sudden with tumultuous shouts,
 Like Nile's swift current, where with deafning roar
 Prone from the steep of Elephantis falls
 Its sea of waters, Hyperanthes pours
 His rapid legions o'er the Grecian camp
 Down from the hills precipitant. No foe
 Is found to stop the torrent ; on they roll
 With thund'ring footsteps o'er the sounding pass.

That night no sooner had the Theban train
 Thermopylae forsaken, but their course
 They bent along the mountains, till they met
 The pow'rs of Xerxes. Dusky twilight still
 Prevailing, Persia with misguided rage
 Assail'd her friends unknown. Th' impetuous spear
 Of Hyperanthes clove the faithless heart
 Of Anaxander ; on the hero press'd,
 And spread destruction through their bleeding ranks ;
 Nor check'd his ardent valour, till he heard
 The name of Thebes in suppliant cries proclaim'd :
 The Persians then receive them, in the front
 As guides they place them, and, amaz'd to learn,
 That daring Greece should Xerxes' camp invade,
 Haste from the mountains, rush along the pass,
 And now tumultuous issue from its mouth.
 At once Laconia's leader gives the sign,
 When, as th' impulsive ram with dreadful sway
 O'erturns the nodding rampart from its base,
 And strews a town with ruin, so the band
 Of serried heroes down the Malian steep,

An hideous depth, the blended numbers swept
Of Thebes and Persia. There no waters flow,
But horrid rocks present their craggy sides;
There dash'd whole legions. From their mangled limbs
A tide of blood rolls foaming to the sea.
Again thy voice, Leonidas, is heard;
The Grecians turn; against the op'ning pass
They point their wheeling phalanx; on they rush:
Astonish'd Persia stops in full career,
Ev'n Hyperanthes starts with terror back.
Confusion drives fresh numbers from the shore,
Whelm'd in the Malian slime. Th' undaunted king
Of Lacedaemon enter'd now the straits,
And rang'd for battle. Hyperanthes soon
Recall'd his chosen warriors from their fear.
Swift on the great Leonidas was bent
A grove of darts; th' incourt'ring armies clos'd.

Whom first, whom last, great Spartan, didst thou foil?
What rivers heard along their echoing banks
Thy name in curses sounded from the lips
Of mothers wailing for their slaughter'd sons!
What towns with empty monuments were fill'd
For those, whom thy unconquerable sword
This day to vultures cast! First Bessus died,
An haughty satrap, whose tyrannic hand
Despoil'd Hyrcania of her golden sheaves,
And laid her forests waste. For him the bees
Among the branches interwove their sweets;
For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine
With rich profusion o'er the goblet foam'd,

Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' side he reign'd,
 And long had fought with unavailing love
 Great Artemisia fam'd in Xerxes' fleet,
 The martial queen of Caria. She disdain'd
 The lover's soft complaint; her dauntless ear
 Was taught to mark the tempest, while it rag'd:
 Her sight was practis'd from the rolling deck
 To brave the chafing billows; doom'd to meet
 That day of horror, when the weeping eye
 Of Xerxes saw the blood of nations flow,
 And to its bottom tinge the briny floods
 Of Salamis, whence she with Asia fled,
 She only not inglorious: low reclines
 Her lover now, on Hermus' banks no more
 To sound her name, nor tell the vocal groves
 His fruitless sorrows. Then Madauces fell,
 A Paphlagonian born amid the sound
 Of dashing surges, and the roar of winds;
 Who o'er th' inhospitable Euxine waves
 Was wont from high Carambis' cliff to watch
 Th' ill-fated bark, which cut the Pontic stream,
 Then with his dire associates through the deep
 For spoil and slaughter guide his hostile prow.
 With these Tithraustes far from Medus fall'n,
 His native tide, with blooming strength indu'd,
 And manly grace, Lilaeus, who had left
 The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields,
 And Babylonian Tenagon expir'd.
 His bravest friends on ev'ry side o'erthrown
 With indignation Hyperanthes view'd,

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And in fierce haste his dauntless arm oppos'd
 To Sparta's hero. Each his lance protends,
 But thousands rush with interposing shields,
 Such sacred lives all anxious to defend ;
 Or thither fortune urg'd the tide of war,
 Their term protracting for augmented fame.
 So, when two gallies, lab'ring through the foam,
 Present for battle their destructive beaks,
 The billows oft, by hurricanes impell'd,
 With mountainous commotion dash between,
 And either bark, in black'ning tempests veil'd,
 Waft from its distant foe. But fiercer burn'd
 Thy ardour, mighty Spartan, while in blood
 Thy falchion rag'd unwearied. Now the steeds
 Of day were climbing their meridian steep,
 And o'er the Persian camp the shouts of war
 Burst from Thermopylae. Pharnuchus heard,
 Who from his couch beyond the Malian plain,
 Rous'd by the tumult in the neighb'ring tents,
 To aid his lord had left Thessalia's fields
 With Syria, Colchis, and Armenia's bands,
 Th' Assyrians, and Chaldeans. Asia's camp
 Was still the seat of terrour, and despair.
 As in some fruitful clime, which late hath known
 The rage of winds and floods, when now the storm
 Is heard no longer and the deluge fled,
 Still o'er the wasted region nature mourns
 In melancholy silence, through the grove
 With prostrate glories lie the stately oak
 And elm uprooted, while the plains are spread

With fragments swept from villages o'erthrown,
 And round the pastures flocks and herds are cast
 In weltring heaps of death; so Persia's host
 In horror mute one boundless scene displays
 Of desolation: half devour'd by fire,
 Its tall pavilions, and its warlike cars
 Hide all the field with ruin; here in gore
 Its princes lie, and nameless thousands there,
 Here legions bleeding by the Grecian steel,
 There Persians slain by Persians still declare
 The wild confusion of the direful night,
 When wanting signals, and their leaders care
 They rush'd to mutual slaughter. Xerxes' tent
 On its exalted summit, when the dawn
 First streaks the glowing sky, was wont to bear
 The golden form of Mithra, clos'd between
 Two lucid crystals, to the Barb'rous host
 An awful signal all in arms to leave
 Their crouded tents, and numberless to wait
 Their monarch's presence; this Pharnuchus rears
 High on the proud pavilion: at the sight
 Their consternation is at length dispell'd,
 And through th' assembling nations hope revives.
 Pharnuchus then from all the number forms
 A chosen train; Thermopylae he seeks;
 Their march in loudest clamours is proclaim'd.
 His phalanx soon Leonidas commands
 To circle backward from the Malian shore:
 Their order changes; now half-orb'd they stand
 By Oeta's mountains guarded from behind

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With either flank united to the rock.
 As, by th' excelling architect dispos'd
 To shield some haven, a stupendous mole,
 Fram'd of the grove and quarry's mingled strength,
 In ocean's bosom penetrates afar;
 There stands the pride of art against the weight
 Of seas, unmov'd, and breaks the whelming surge:
 So, when Pharnuchus with innum'rous pow'rs
 Thermopylae had fill'd, th' unyielding Greeks
 Oppos'd the hostile deluge, and its rage,
 Unshaken stem'd. Amid the foremost rank
 Leonidas his dreadful station held.
 Before him soon an horrid void is seen
 Through Persia's legions, and the proud remains
 Of noblest chiefs th' insanguin'd rock bestrew.
 Pharnuchus, glowing with revenge and wrath,
 Discharges full at Lacedaemon's chief
 His iron-studded mace. Aside it glanc'd,
 Turn'd by the massy shield, and prone to earth
 The Persian fell. Alcander to the rock
 Transfix'd the prostrate satrap through the reins,
 Himself receiving in th' unguarded side
 The lance of Hyperanthes. Low he lies,
 The only Theban, who by Sparta's king
 Abode intrepid, and to Greece preserv'd
 His faith untainted; a physician sage,
 Who from Cythaeron each benignant herb
 Was wont to gather, and expatiate o'er
 The Heliconian pastures, where no plant
 Of poison springs, but such, whose healing juice

Expells the venom from the viper's tooth
 Fill'd with the sweetness of the soil divine:
 Him all, who languish on the bed of pain,
 Him most, the wretch, whom want and sickness spreads
 On earth's cold breast neglected, shall deplore.
 On him the brave Artontes sinks in death,
 Renown'd through wide Bithynia, now no more
 The clam'rous rites of Cybele to share,
 While Echo murmurs through the hollow caves
 Of Berecynthian Dindymus. The hand
 Of Alpheus sent him to the shades of night.
 E'er from the dead he disingag'd his spear
 Huge Abradates, glorying in his strength,
 Surpassing all of Cissian race, advanc'd
 To grapple with the victor; near him now
 His foremost step the Persian plants, his hand
 Grasps at the Spartan's shoulder. Alpheus once
 At Nemea's games the wrestlers crown obtain'd.
 His art he summons, and his rapid foot
 Obliquely strikes against the Persian's heel;
 He falling seiz'd on Alpheus' neck, and dragg'd
 His foe upon him. Streight an hundred darts
 Of thronging Persia cleave the Grecian's back.
 To Abradates' breast the weapons pierce,
 And rivet both in death. This Maron saw,
 And Polydorus, who with victims fall'n
 Before their vengeance hide their brother's corse.
 At length the gen'rous blood of Maron warms
 The lance of Hyperanthes. On the spear
 Of Polydorus falls the pond'rous ax

Of Sacian Mardus; from the yielding wood
 The steely point is sever'd. Undismay'd
 The Spartan stoops to rear the knotted mace
 Of slain Pharnuchus; but thy fatal sword,
 Abrocomes, that dreadful instant marks
 To rend his op'ning side: unconquer'd still,
 Swift he discharges on the Sacian's front
 An horrid wound, that reach'd the bursting brain.
 Down his own limbs the while a torrent flows
 Of vital crimson; smiling he surveys
 His sorrows ending, and his Spartan name
 Renew its lustre. Sudden to his side
 Springs Dithyrambus; through th' uplifted arm
 Of Mindus, pointing his impetuous dart
 Against the bleeding Spartan, he impells
 His steel resistless. Polydorus now
 Stretch'd his cold hand to Thespia's friendly chief,
 Then bow'd his head in everlasting peace;
 And Mindus, wasted by his flowing wound,
 Beside him faints and dies. In Ninus old
 Had his exalted ancestors sustain'd
 Th' Assyrian scepter. Now to Persia's throne
 A tributary lord he rul'd the vales,
 Where Tigris swift between the parted hills
 Of tall Niphates draws its foaming tide
 Impregnating the glebe. At once a croud
 Of ardent Persians seize the conqueror's lance:
 An hundred arms infold it. Thespia's youth
 With one strong hand maintains the struggling spear,
 The other bares his falchion. Through his foes,

With lightning wing'd, it scatters wounds and death.
 Artáphrenes in torture feels his arm
 Lopt from the shoulder. Zatis leaves his hand
 Yet twining round the long disputed lance.
 On Pheron's neck descends the pond'rous blade;
 Down drops the sever'd head; the vital stream
 Spouts from its purple sluices. Mardon strides
 Across the pointed ash. His weight o'ercomes
 The wearied Grecian, who resigns his hold,
 Yet cleaves th' exulting Persian to the brain.
 But now the fierce Abrócomes approach'd,
 And louting shakes his dart. The wary Greek
 With his broad buckler intercepts the stroke,
 And closes with the Persian. Then what aid
 Of mortal force, or interposing heav'n
 Preserv'd the eastern warrior? Lo! the friend
 Of Teribazus eager to avenge
 His lov'd companion, and at once to guard
 A brother's life, beneath the sinewy arm,
 That instant rais'd for slaughter, plung'd his lance
 In Dithyrambus' side. The vital strings
 At once relax; nor Fame, nor Greece demand
 More from his valour, and supine he lies
 In glories ripen'd on his blooming head.
 Him shall the Thespian virgins in their songs
 Record once loveliest of the youthful train,
 The good, the gentle, generous, and brave;
 Now fall'n his country's grace, and parent's pride:
 So sinks the cedar, which in verdant bloom
 High on the top of Libanus had stood

death. The mountain's boast, and glory of the grove;
 Then to adorn the mansions of the great,
 Or dignify some god's high-vaulted fane
 Uprooted low'rs its heav'n aspiring head.
 Diomedon bursts forward. Round his friend
 He heaps destruction. What a troop of ghosts
 Attend thy shade, fall'n hero! Long unmatch'd
 Prevail'd his vengeful arm, and Persia bled;
 Till four Assyrians on his shelving lance,
 Ere yet extracted from a prostrate corse,
 Their pond'rous maces all discharge. It broke.
 Yet with the truncheon of his shatter'd spear
 The Greek sustains the contest. Through his eye
 The shiver'd fragment penetrates the brain
 Of one bold warrior; there the splinty wood
 Infix'd remains: the hero then unsheaths
 His falchion broad; a second views aghast
 His entrails falling, while Plataea's chief
 From the gash'd belly draws his reeking sword:
 Prone sinks a third beneath the falchion's weight;
 Though with the furious stroke the yielding blade
 Flew from the hilt and left the Greek disarm'd:
 The fourth that instant lifts his knotted mace;
 It falls resistless on the batter'd helm,
 And low the great Diomedon extends
 His mighty limbs. So, weaken'd by the force
 Of some tremendous engine, which the hand
 Of Mars impells, a stately turret spreads
 Its disuniting ramparts on the plain;
 Joy fills th' assailants, while the battle's tide

Whelms o'er the widening breach. The Persians thus
 O'er the late fear'd Diomedon had rush'd,
 And swept the Greeks before them; when behold
 Leonidas! At once their ardour froze.
 He had a while within the orb retir'd,
 Oppress'd by labour. Now with strength restor'd
 He pours fresh ruin from the Spartan front.
 As, long retarded by th' unmoving calm,
 Soon, as the rising gale fresh-breathing curls
 The surging main, again the vessel bounds
 With all her op'ning sails; the hero thus,
 His buckler huge, and formidable spear
 Advancing, through the Asian files renews
 His course of slaughter. Destiny compells
 The bold Hydarnes to th' unequal fight,
 Who proudly vaunting left his weeping bride
 To mourn his absence on the distant verge
 Of Bactrian Ochus. Victory in vain
 He parting promis'd. Wanton hope no more
 Round his cold heart delusive sports, nor paints
 Th' imagin'd pomp of triumphs, gorgeous spoils,
 And trains of shackled Greeks. The Spartan pierc'd
 His shield, and bursting corselet. From the slain
 The victor draws his iron-pointed spear,
 Bent, and ineebled with the forceful blow.
 Meantime within his buckler's verge, unseen
 Amphistreu's stealing, in th' unguarded flank
 His poniard struck. With swift effusion gush'd
 A crimson torrent, but the scaly mail
 Immediate death repell'd. Th' indignant king

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Gripes with resistless might the Persian's throat,
 And drags him prostrate. None in Xerxes' court
 Was more corrupt, with insolence more base,
 With rancour more fallacious. Phrygia pin'd
 Beneath th'oppression of his ruthless sway.
 Was there a field once fruitful, or a town
 Once populous and rich? The horrid change
 To want and desolation there declar'd,
 The curs'd Amphistreu's govern'd. As the spear
 Of Tyrian Cadmus riveted to earth
 The pois'nous dragon, whose infectious breath
 Had blasted half Boeotia; so the chief
 Of Lacedaemon, trampling on the neck
 Of fall'n Amphistreu's, fixes to the rock
 The gasping tyrant, and his broken lance
 Leaves in the panting corse. Meanwhile thy wound
 Incessant flows, great hero, and augments
 The hopes of Persia. Thou unyielding still
 Sustain'st the contest, while unnumber'd darts
 Are shiver'd on thy buckler, and thy feet
 With glitt'ring points bestrew; the Colchian sword
 And Persian dagger leave their shatter'd hilts;
 Bent is the Caspian scymetar; in vain
 The Sacian wheels his falchion, and their mace
 The strong Chaldaeans and Assyrians raise;
 Thou stand'st unshaken, like a Thracian hill,
 Like Rhodopé, or Haemus; where in vain
 The thund'rer plants his livid bolt, in vain
 The glancing lightning cleaves th'incrusted snow,
 And Winter, beating with eternal war,

Shakes from his dreary wings discordant storms,
 Chill fleet, and clatt'ring hail. But now advanc'd
 Abrocomes, and aim'd his deadly spear
 Against the forehead of Laconia's chief,
 Not unperceiv'd; the Spartan's active hand,
 His sword opposing, upward rears the blade
 Against the threatening javelin; o'er his crest
 Its fury wastes in air, while swift descends
 The pond'rous falchion on the Persian's knee:
 At once the bone is sever'd; prone he falls;
 Crush'd on the ground beneath ten thousand feet,
 The gallant warrior breathes the last remains
 Of tortur'd life. The Spartan thus maintain'd
 Th' unequal combat with his single sword.
 But Agis calls Dienees, alarms.
 Demophilus, Megistias; they from heaps
 Of Allarodian and Sasperian slain
 Haste to their leader, and before him raise
 The brazen bulwark of their massy shields.
 The foremost line of Asia stands and bleeds;
 The rest recoil: but Hyperanthes strides
 From rank to rank throughout his various host,
 Their dying hopes rekindles, in the brave
 Excites new valour, and the freezing heart
 Of Fear revives. Astaspes first obey'd
 The hero's voice, a fierce Chaldaean lord
 Vain of his birth from ancient Belus drawn,
 Proud of his wealthy stores, and stately domes;
 But now more proud by conquest, since his might
 Had foil'd the strong Diomedon. He seeks

The front of battle. His victorious mace
 Against the brave Diéneces he bends;
 The weighty blow bore down th' opposing shield,
 And crush'd the Spartan's shoulder: idle hangs
 The buckler now, and loads th' inactive arm,
 Depriv'd of all its functions. Agis bares
 His vengeful blade, and severs from the foe
 His hand exalted for a second stroke.
 The dying fingers with convulsive grasp
 The falling mace infold. A Sacian chief
 Springs on the victor. Iäxartes' banks
 To this brave savage gave his name and birth:
 His looks erect, and fierce deportment spoke
 A bold and gallant spirit, but untam'd,
 With dreary wilds familiar, and a race
 Of rude Barbarians horrid as their clime.
 The hostile spear, against his forehead aim'd,
 Glanc'd upward, and o'erturn'd his iron cone:
 The blow renew'd his bursting chest divides.
 Th' undaunted Sacian writhes along the lance,
 Which griding passes through his breast and back,
 A barbed arrow from his quiver draws,
 Deep in the streaming pap of Agis hides
 The deadly steel, then grimly smiles and dies.
 From him Fate hastens to a nobler prey;
 For lo! the brave Diéneces presents
 His breast obnoxious to a thousand darts.
 The shield deserts his unsustaining arm,
 And slides to earth. A grove of javelins rose
 On his broad bosom. Still for ev'ry wound

He hurl'd a Persian to th' infernal gloom ;
 But life at length forsook his riven heart,
 And o'er the rock the gasping hero stretch'd
 His dying limbs in gore. Who now can stand
 The torrent of Barbarians? Agis bleeds,
 His spear is irrecoverably plung'd
 In Iaxartes' body. Low reclines
 Diéneces in blood. The Spartan chief,
 Himself o'erlabour'd, of his lance disarm'd,
 The rage of death can exercise no more.
 One last and glorious effort age performs:
 Demophilus, Megistias join their might,
 And stem the floods of conquest ; while the spear
 Of slain Diéneces to Sparta's king
 The fainting Agis bears. The blazing steel,
 In that dire hand again for battle rear'd,
 Blasts all the Persian valour. Back in heaps
 They roll confounded, by their leader's voice
 In vain exhorted longer to endure
 The ceaseless waste of that unconquer'd arm.
 So, when the giants from Olympus chas'd
 Th' inferiour gods, themselves in terrour shun'd
 Th' incessant streams of lightning, when the hand
 Of heav'n's great father with eternal might
 Sustain'd the direful conflict. O'er the field
 A while Bellona stills the rage of war ;
 When Thespia's leader, and Megistias drop
 At either side of Lacedaemon's king.
 Beneath the weight of years and labour bend
 The hoary warriors. Not a groan molests

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Their parting spirits, but in death's calm night,
 All silent bows each venerable head:
 Like aged oaks, whose deep-descending roots
 Had pierc'd resistless through the mountain's side,
 And there for three long centuries had brav'd
 Each angry gust of Eurys, and the north;
 Till, sapless now by Time's despoiling hand,
 Without a blast their mossy trunks recline
 Before their parent hill. By Sparta's chief
 None now remains but Agis, who implores
 The last kind office from his godlike friend,
 The Sacian's arrow from his pap to draw.
 This done, life issues with the sanguine tide.
 Thy comely features, Agis, now are pale;
 Cold are thy graceful limbs, and dim thy eyes,
 Which now no more with placid beams reveal
 The native virtues of thy gentle breast.
 The noble corse Leonidas surveys.
 Fate yields him one short interval of peace
 To know, how lovely are the patriot's wounds,
 And see those honours grace the man, he lov'd.
 But Hyperanthes with his single spear
 Forth from the trembling ranks of Asia tow'rs
 His country's glory to redeem, or fall.
 The Spartan, worn by toil, his languid arm
 Once more uplifting, waits the dauntless prince.
 The heroes now stood adverse. Each a while
 Restrain'd his valour, and his godlike foe
 Admiring view'd. Such majesty and strength
 To fierce Pelides, all incircled round

With Trojan dead; and such to Priam's son
 By struggling virtue, and by manly shame
 From flight recall'd, great Homer's fancy gave.
 O thou exalted o'er the laurel'd train
 High, as the sweet Calliope is thron'd
 Above each virgin of the tuneful hill;
 Now let one beam of thy celestial light
 Dart through my lab'ring mind; lest Freedom mourn
 Her chosen son dishonour'd in these strains!

Now Hyperanthes, and Laconia's king
 With brandish'd points, and targets high uprear'd
 Commence the fatal combat, which must close
 The long-continu'd horrors of the day.
 Fix'd with amaze and fear, the Asian files
 Unmov'd and silent on their bucklers pause.
 Thus o'er th' expanse of India's wilds contend
 The elephant, and horn'd rhinoceros;
 Earth groans beneath them, as with wrath untam'd
 Each hideous bulk in dire encounter meets:
 With distant terror gaze the savage throng.
 Prolong'd by varied art, the dubious fight
 The great event suspended. On the foe
 His well-aim'd spear at last the Spartan drove,
 And pierc'd the shield. Inexorable fate
 That moment hover'd o'er the eastern prince,
 When with unmatch'd celerity aside
 He swung his buckler; underneath his arm,
 Unstain'd with blood the hostile javelin pass'd:
 Meantime, with joy, and ardent hopes elate
 Of fame and conquest, sudden he impell'd

His rapid lance against the Spartan's throat;
 But he with wary skill his target rais'd,
 And o'er his shoulder turn'd the glancing steel;
 For one last effort then his scatter'd strength
 Recall'd, and, wheeling with resistless force
 His massy buckler; dash'd the brazen verge
 Against the Persian's forehead: down he sunk
 Without a groan expiring, as o'erwhelm'd
 Beneath a marble fragment, from its seat
 Heav'd by a whirlwind, sweeping o'er the ridge
 Of some aspiring mansion. Gen'rous prince!
 What could his valour more? His single might
 He match'd with great Leonidas, and fell
 Before his native bands. The Spartan chief
 Now stands alone. In heaps his slaughter'd friends
 All stretch'd around him lie. The distant foes
 Show'r on his head innumerable darts.
 From various sluices gush the vital floods,
 And stain his fainting limbs. Nor yet with pain
 His brow is clouded, but those beauteous wounds,
 The sacred pledges of his own renown,
 And Sparta's safety, with serenest joy
 His closing eye contemplates. Fame can twine
 No brighter laurels round his glorious head,
 His virtue more to labour Fate forbids,
 And lays him now in honourable rest
 To seal his country's liberty in death.

.T H E E N D.

the rapid lapse of the summer's time;
 and he with every kind of regret
 took to his chamber, and the glowing feelings
 for one last effort than his former strength
 recalled, and, wheeled with restless force
 his manly backer; light the summer rays
 through the T. and's forehead; down the dark
 without a groan expiring
 beneath a marble flag
 shrouded by a white shroud
 to some adjoining mansion, then from place to place
 that could be, yet more, his single might
 to match'd with great Leonidas, and fell
 before his native land. The Spartan chief
 now stands alone, in heart his last friend
 all thoughts record him his, the brave
 now on his head insupportable
 from various feelings such the vital force
 And then his fainting limbs, how yet with pain
 the blow is clouded, but still conscious wounds
 the fatal pillars of his own person
 and spare's glory, with tears for
 the glowing contrast. I now can take
 a brighter laurels round his glowing head,
 a virtue more to labor fate forbids,
 and lays him now in honorable rest
 to feel his country's liberty in death.



